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ALEXANDER THE GREAT

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

A Biographical Study

by

E. ILIFF ROBSON
Formerly Scholar of Christ's College, Cambridge

JONATHAN CAPE
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE
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PREFACE

PERHAPS the origin of this study may be its best apology. In trying to instruct a Sixth Form in the history of Alexander at regular intervals I have each time come back to the same difficulty. Most historians, and much more therefore the school text-books, repeat a sort of agreed story of Alexander, based on Arrian, though they show some independence on doubtful points, such as the massacre of the Branchidæ or the guilt of Philotas. But all along there is a group of historians who, using the same authorities, take a different view. This group, and this view, is usually called 'anti-Macedonian,' and these writers are thought to be under the stress of some political conviction which forces them to take that view. Since some of these are men of known probity and scholarship, the explanation appeared to me lame. Further study in the authorities themselves revealed that this cleavage existed among them also; and that means that there never was an accepted, settled, idea of Alexander at all. Then the suspicion dawned that this inconsistency, these antinomies, existed in Alexander himself. There was no settled picture of Alexander because there was no settled Alexander: he refused to be entered in a category. This being so, the recovery of the true 'Alexander in himself' became impossible. Much indeed we can

know; but the seeming-solid structure of many historians was a card-house: they pursued indeed a Muse, but clasped a tree. Thus it became needful to ask, was not the original fault rather of the historians' own method? Of history, in fact, itself? This set me reading diligently whatsoever I could find upon the study of history; a good deal of this was not directly relevant, but I came at length to rest in a view which does accept this instability of the 'fact' or the 'factual,' which sees history rather the work of those who are looking on than of those who are acting; and finds a great deal more interest in this work of the onlookers (themselves now and then, perhaps, actors too) as being a mental or spiritual product or 'project,' than in the too-often 'dead' facts, 'mere' facts, which go to make up the plot of the drama.

This would mean that while we need not attempt to write history on any new or startling plan, we must look at it from another angle, from the inner, rather than the outer, from the imaginative rather than the logical.

Such a conception of history would mean perhaps a farewell to the neat chronicles and tidy summaries familiar in our best histories as well as in our text-books. But it would not result in scepticism, in vagueness; rather it would find a more solid ground in the progressive human mind than it could find

in the shifting sands of long obscured historical personalities.

Whether a presentation of such a view in this study of Alexander the Great will be worth while, must yet be seen.

While I make the utmost use of authorities, fragmentary or other, I do not burden the pages with footnote references, save where really necessary. Scholars will know them; learners will find most of them in Grote; and those general readers for whom the book is intended will not be able to make use of them. To modern studies I owe much; and not least to the works of the late Dr. Hogarth and of W. W. Tarn.

A full bibliography of Alexander literature is given in volume vi of the *Cambridge Ancient History*. To this may be added Sir Aurel Stein's articles on Aornos in the *Geographical Journal*, November and December, 1927.[1]

Discussions on the relative value of the authorities are numerous, and lose in value by being incomplete. An 'Alexander-harmony' at the hands of some competent scholar is wanted.

Nearly everything which bears upon Alexander's life, surroundings, and organization, has been gleaned and garnered by Helmut Berve (*Das*

[1] And in his new work, *On Alexander's Track to the Indus* (Macmillan), chapters xvii to xxii.

Alexanderreich auf Prosopographischer Grundlage, München, 1926), and late views on Alexander have been collected and discussed by W. Hoffman (*Das Literarische Porträt Alexanders*, Leipzig, 1907. Clio has indeed – so far as main authorities for Alexander go – been, beyond her usual fashion, teasing and tantalizing; but she has certainly seen to it that whatsoever there is, has been made most accessible by a large company of willing scholars.

INTRODUCTION

To define History in all the fullness of the word is not easy, but for those who value etymology, so often elusive, a simple definition lies to hand. History is enquiry, or interrogation. Herodotus – Father of History, rightly so called in virtue of his ever-more-appreciated excellences, wrongly, in so far as others had written history before him – reveals to us his simple method; he went about and asked. Not that he was uncritical; but there lay his real method, the interrogating of those who should, or who might, know, and the setting down their answers. History is still interrogation, but now we interrogate the 'facts,' which we seldom obtain, as did Herodotus, at first-hand. We are cautious and critical, and rejoice in judgments so logically approached, and so nicely balanced, that the student of whom Croce jests was well-nigh justified when he said that learned writers, with much labour and pain, contrived to know nothing, while he himself could do the same by the mere gift of nature. Yet we have also advanced beyond the merely critical; for we have come to think less of the fact itself, in itself, or even in its place in a chain of facts, save in so far as it helps to reveal to us some tendency which grows, some movement which gathers, some idea which develops; we write our histories now of political

creeds, of literary influences, of manners. But our methods are still rather the same as they were; we select from the literary world's card-index those cards which are pertinent to our enquiry, these we interrogate, and from these we deduce our universals.

None the less there is here a great stride made; at least we are in the world of movements, notions, ideas; and if our facts remain the objectivities they were of old, yet by our process, by our purpose, and even (let it at once be said) by our bias, we get very near in these 'Tendency-histories' to the mind, to the spirit of man. Both to mind and to spirit, I say, since one word will not cover both; nor will either word alone represent the French *esprit*, the Italian *spirito*. 'Spirit' will here mean (as near as may be) the mysterious impulse, power, dynamic energy which stimulates the mind to do its proper office of intuition, of reason, of purpose, and of moral direction.

Other changes are about us. While our facts are as dear to us as ever, while our logic is largely based on enumerations, and while our collections are largely made from written documents, some new tendency is abroad in the selection of our documents and in the arrangement of them. We have learned to value not so much codes of law or tribute-lists but rather little bits of gossip, mere *obiter dicta*, scraps of songs, just what, after all, is nearest, or comes sheerest from, the human spirit.

Truth lives in wells, and we must often descend to their profundities to find it. But Truth, or some reflection of Truth, lurks also in the wayside pools; and the pools gather, and make little runlets of popular impression or folk-legend. There too we must track Truth down. It is (to change metaphor) in the gossamer threads of chance gossip rather than in the woven strands of the biographers and historians that we are likely to find a genuine tradition.[1]

These lesser sources, not abundantly available for ancient history, but numerous for mediæval, are only dangerous in so far as we fail to balance them by a fairly weighty *argumentum e silentio*; cynicism and scandal always come on to paper so easy; it is no doubt the gall in the ink which makes it run so trippingly off the pen; but praise, or mere contentment, makes poor 'copy,' and does not come easy, even where most sincerely intended. We must remember to make due allowance for this. Still, all this type of source gets certainly near to life. Altogether, then, we are suffering much less than before from that study of a sort of mere 'tomb-stone epigraphy' which is most rightly named 'dead history.' Then, again, we are still in a state of

[1] Reference may be made to *An Elizabethan Journal*, 1591–1594, by G. B. Harrison, where the literary history of these years is sought largely in the *obiter dicta* or 'gossip' of the time.

reaction both against those determined routers-out of legends, of the Niebuhr school, who piped these historical rodents away into the cold rivers of criticism, and also against the other type who saw solar myths always dancing before their eyes and a Farmer's Guide in every nursery tale. Rationalization, in fact, has lost its first half-guilty charm; we take the legend to our heart, and coax from it its little treasure of 'fact,' even when it must blush and stand confessed for an etymological confusion, a chance personification, or even a quite genuine nature myth. Then we distinguish between school and school of legend; those, for instance, which arise from the soil where their hero worked, and begin close upon the date of his departure, and those (far the commoner) which like sea-borne wines must travel before they mature, and only come to rest in their homeland with something of an exotic atmosphere about them. Or once more, we have so far shaken off the severity shown by the early critical or rationalizing historians that we come to like a bias and often reckon a writer witty if he is unfair. And this is partly right. History can never be history if it is cold and impersonal; it must be 'warm and energic'; it must win its power from the stokehold of a man's heart; it must have drive and movement.

In this sense Croce's paradox that history is

essentially contemporaneous holds good. Not only must the documents, to be of service, be as near contemporaneous as may be, but, of whatever date they be, they must in any case arise out of contemporary popular impression (an aspect which will be developed later), while if history is not essentially contemporaneous to ourselves, why do we go on writing new histories?

And as for the historian's bias, rightly understood, a bias does not vitiate, but vitalizes. History as a political pamphlet can be both harmless and stimulating; and the more open and pronounced (within reason) the bias, the less harm it can do. The importance of this point will appear especially in connection with Alexander.

Further, we are coming less and less to suspect history under certain guises, such as the historical romance, or such dramatized history as one gets in Aeschylus, Euripides, and even the critical Thucydides.

This is perhaps where most serious students of history stand to-day, though I note certain recent works on history, as well as recent articles and short studies, where explicit acceptance of views of this kind can certainly not be traced. But there are besides other views, held by reputable scholars.

One of these views is this, that the literature of a

given period is apt to be ahead of, and not behind or merely level with, the activities of the period, and expresses not so much the actual feelings of the period, or of the multitude, during the period, but rather an ideal or a body of ideals to which the thought of the preceding period has logically led. The simplest form in which these ideals can be expressed is the drama; and we have a remarkable example in Euripides, declared by all the text-books to be 'quite modern,' 'far ahead of his times,' 'a century removed from his two great predecessors,' and so on, whereas he was as much a child of his time as any other writer; only he spent more time and thought in the setting out of the ideals to which he, as a philosophic thinker, had been pointed by those that went before. Shakespeare is another great example, and so, in epic, is Spenser. Shakespeare's *Henry the Fifth* represents not any particular historical view – for there was little of the critical historian in Shakespeare – of what Henry V may have been, but the ideal of English kingship to be. Perhaps Shakespeare's impatience with the groundlings is based just on this, that they would not see his point. True we have also to reckon with popular conceptions or misconceptions, lagging behind the ideals of the great thinkers, and this too we shall see in the history of Alexander.

What seems easy for the dramatist is not so very

difficult for the historian. Ancient history turned, as a good deal of modern history also does, round certain 'great men', history could, and did, dramatize these 'great men'; imparting to the heroes the qualities desired, and to the villains the vices to be abhorred. This point will recur later in connection with our present hero-villain (for he became a blend of both), Alexander.

But I must now beg the reader to accompany me further, and I shall so far beg his complaisance as to let me use the simplest, even the most hackneyed, illustrations to help him along; while the deeper student will, I trust, give some credit for what he will see to lie behind.

Everyone who studies any subject must make up his mind – and how much more therefore every writer! – whether he approaches the subject as a realist or as an idealist. I do not say that he must have a complete philosophy formed; but he must know by which of the forking roads he is to travel. He may not, perhaps, be a thoroughgoing realist, he may not perhaps, be a thoroughly instructed idealist. But he must have some clear idea how his mind (I purposely avoid technical phrasing) grasps – or how it is itself reacted upon by – those things which we call material objects. He must either decide that these objects, outside him, are as real or as concrete as he is, and truly exist apart from

himself or his mind; or he must decide that these seeming material objects, cognizable only to and by his mind, are therefore in some full sense the world of his mind; and then he must go on to consider how far these things or objects have gained in 'reality' or objectivity for this very reason, as being things of the mind or spirit, or how far they have become filmy and impalpable. He must, in familiar words, ask himself, 'Are things what they seem? or are visions about?' and what, after all, are such 'visions?'

My own bias will already have shown itself, but I venture a familiar and hackneyed example. I see a tree; and with me are other 'selves,' 'egos,' 'spirits,' who also, so they tell me, see a tree. We discuss it. I admire its sturdiness; a timber-merchant estimates its value as timber; a colour-merchant or a painter is interested in its particular sort of greenness; a designer admires its graceful and symmetrical curves; a botanist studies its leaf-formation; a farmer measures its shade for his cattle; an archæologist is anxious to count its rings, and is sure that it goes back to the reign of such and such a king. So we all have our different ideas, with which we clothe our tree; and the important result is that the part we are all agreed upon, the part we all see the same, is the part which is small and does not very much count; while the sum-total of all our separate

importations, or projections, is not only large, but also touches that considerable part of the tree's qualities in which we all see apart, and as to which we perhaps actually differ. So that while we are at one as to a sort of raw-material of what we all call 'tree,' we all, beyond a certain undefined point, make, almost create, our own tree. Now if this be true, as it seems to be, of single 'objects,' it is true of the grouping of objects, and the grouping of objects are what we call facts, which make the 'materials' of history. What residuum then is there in any given 'fact' sufficiently common to us all to be even a basis for our 'history'? 'William the Conqueror, 1066'; what does it convey to us? *Expende Hannibalem*, how much is really left? Do we not each make the greater part of our fact, of Hannibal, of William? And the fact, or the character, may as well be before us to-day as in the past; the same holds good. We are 'left guessing,' but the point is, we do not give up, we go on guessing. It is the guesses, after all, that count. The merely objective residue, if indeed it is objective, will not take us far.

Here let me leave aside my own halting exposition, and give the view of history taken by the Italian philosopher Gentile, in words far more scientific than mine, and yet clear and intelligible even to those without special philosophic training. This is Pro-

fessor J. Alexander Smith's account of Gentile's view of history:[1]

'By History we must mean not merely (or at all) the History which unrolls itself before us, but the History which we enact, and again not merely (or at all) the History which we enact (*historia historizata*) but that which we more potently create in thought and judgment, in ceaseless commentation upon the bare and vanishing facts (*historia historizans*), a commentary which encroaches from the margin upon the text until the gloss extrudes and displaces the evanescent original. . . . Nothing is real save spirit, and spirit is naught but the process, without beginning and without end, of its own absolute self-creation.'

The Professor goes on to say that Gentile's doctrine is a hard one. In its extreme form, as given it certainly is; and the quiet sanity which English philosophy shares with English mysticism is not likely to accept it, or the less startling views of Croce, Gentile's master, in their entirety. But the main platform appears sound enough; Croce's 'dead facts' as opposed to 'live facts,' Gentile's insistence on spirit (by which he includes, or absorbs 'mind'), and on spiritual values, the idea of history as an act of man's spirit, of the 'commentary' as greater than

[1] *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, volume xx.

the 'text,' just because the commentary is essentially spiritual, all this I do not see how we can gainsay. We should note that the commentary 'unrolls itself' just as much as the text: is just as coherent, nay, far more so; and it is the commentary with which we are here chiefly concerned, while most histories, and most biographies, are too deeply concerned with the 'evanescent text,' the 'dead fact.' It does not matter 'what porridge had John Keats,' or whether this or that particular actress affected Poms or Chows; and the more that kind of 'text' can evanesce, the better. It does, or may, matter how the actress interpreted; it does certainly matter what Keats' spirit called up for us from a Grecian urn.

Now the Alexander of the historians is not by any means solidly objective. Given even a reasonable nucleus of agreement, we must each 'create' the rest. And in this we are merely carrying on a process. The recent historians we consult have done so, consciously or not; the 'authorities' have done so; and contemporary popular opinion, which has seriously affected these authorities, has done it before them. And Alexander himself, the kernel of it all, what is he? A 'mere man,' one may say, in one sense; but far more truly himself an idea, a spirit, a dynamic force – nothing very analysable here! And as such force he was himself both a radiant, whence further

forces, further ideas, emanated, and (what is more to our purpose) a focus, collecting the ideas, ideals, aspirations, of his age. We call him The Great; wherein lies this greatness, or any such greatness? We use the word commonly of a conqueror – never mind whether his cause was just or unjust; he is 'great' because of his tramplings and his triumphs. But the essence of greatness, over and above this, seems to lie also just in this very correspondence with environment, a fitting into the age and its ideals, in such a way that the age sees in the hero itself reflected and the hero is indeed the age. If we inquire how this comes about, we may say perhaps that the age projects itself, its ideas, its ideals, upon and into the hero; not indeed the sum-total, but a large group of contemporary human mind, inspired, as we put it, by the same spirit, impelled by the same 'moment' (or motive force), projects its thoughts, notions, ideas, into a personality who sums them all up in himself, or who seems to them so to do. I fear that here we have an old but rather out-at-elbows friend reappearing – none other than the Zeitgeist, the Spirit of the Age, always abroad and seeking embodiment. And yet there is no need to be ashamed of this somewhat discredited being – he comes to us now with better credentials than of yore.

But before we think of him further, it will be wise to consider what were the 'moments' of this Mace-

donian Age. They were (but the list is not necessarily complete) first, the breakdown of the city state, and indeed states generally; and with this, a general breakdown of most of Greece south of Macedon. People were uneasy. As for Macedon, it had sprung to power all for nothing. Southern Greece was not worth breaking spears for. There was little to plunder; they did not think in those days of carrying off Elgin marbles. Athens talked brave words, but she was a much-kicked football which never really lost its resilience but had no longer its lively and quick rebound. Then there had been great improvements in warfare, largely owing to those first-class commanders, Epameinondas and Pelopidas; and these new war ideas had been taken up by the one unflushed tribe of Greece, a hardy tribe of mountaineers and coast-men; and in Greece there were no enemies worth all this new steel. 'Blond beasts' were thirsting for loot and glory that was not, after Chaeroneia, to be had in Greece itself. Thirdly, thanks no doubt to travellers' tales and earlier expeditions, there were wild notions (though the reality was often wild enough) of immemorial treasures to be had for the taking, and of Arabian Nights' adventures for the asking. Then there was a genuine move towards scientific exploration – and the bestiaries of the Callisthenes Romance tell us at least the kind of zoology they looked for;

the East was to the northern Greeks what the Poles are to us now, or the topmost Himalayas, something to be conquered; but with the added attractions of luxury and loot on the way. Fifthly, there was also a spirit, quite sincere, of a sort of knight errantry, already seen in choice spirits like Pelopidas; and joined to this a new crusading spirit, which was to bring 'culture' to the poor benighted Persian. Here then we have something of the ebullitions or effervescences or surgings of the age. The great man of an age is one who can surf-ride safe to shore upon these boilings and bubblings. His particular plank does not much matter; but he understands these turbulent movements which in their turn are his support, and on them he rides safe home. Alexander – Julius Cæsar – Napoleon – there you have them all three.

Thus all the little details which reach us through the ages will be of utmost interest still. Only a certain class of these will need to be relegated to the antiquarian; what song the Syrens sang, 'how many notes a sackbut has, and whether shawms have strings,' these things do not really help on history, whose flight is higher, and at nobler game. Man's mind, man's spirit, man's soul; that to which his soul soars, that to which his spirit impels, that which his mind perceives, conceives, projects, that is the medley-matter of history's book. There must be

geographical limits, there must be precise knowledge of historical dates; though one may well sigh for the day when our examinees will not be obliged to conceal in their palms 'what are frequent in palms,' but will be given their book of dates as budding mathematicians are given their table of logarithms. Moreover, without working on any positivist theory, it may be possible to relegate to their place a great many of those 'facts' which do not enter so very seriously into everyday life. 'The number of times,' says 'Evoe' in *Punch*, 'that a man will need to remember that Ai means a three-toed sloth are practically negligible, and the same applies to the Pragmatic Sanction. . . .' An example of the sort of fact which the most conscientious historian of Alexander need not often record is the distances given, as duly measured by the 'Bematistæ' or Surveyors, or as recorded by Nearchus and his secretaries. These belong to geographies and to guide-books, rarely to history. Yet all these records are ultimately useful to make for us the whole picture, to stage for us the whole play. Play, I say, for as Hume (*Doctrine of Immortality*) writes :

'The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance, pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. . . . The comparison of

the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented or of the materials of which it is composed.'

Had Hume written to-day, he would probably have used a different image. An intermediate figure is given in Peacock's parody (Mr. Skionar in *Crotchet Castle*): 'We cannot look directly into the nature of things; we can only catch glimpses of the mighty shadows in the camera obscura of transcendental intelligence.' But if the mind is a sort of theatre, the common mind of an epoch or age suggests rather the Film. On to the screen of Time is projected by the mind or spirit of the age a rapidly moving picture. As in the 'pictures' of to-day, the 'star' will be indeed the cynosure of all eyes; but it is the film, the movement, that counts. The servant-girl will gape at the film-star, the scientist will concern himself rather with the way the moving pictures are created and projected, while the social student will wonder why such an age demands such a film; why, for example, an age which calls for 'Safety First' demands swift cars dashing over precipices and hairbreadth escapes. But our main point is that history is moving, not still, dynamic, not static.

The Alexander 'picture' is largely the creation or

projection of the Philip-Alexander age. Apart from those 'moments' we have considered, there were many other ideas which went to the production of this film. It is here that the Alexander-legends help us. Absurd and ridiculous as they seem, these somehow found lodgment in human minds; they count for something, perhaps for a good deal. The Homeric tradition played its part; and Alexander himself fostered this. If the picture of Alexander is a little confused and self-contradictory, can we well wonder? What are we really to make of him?

Some sort of answer appears to me to lie in a great play of Calderon's *La Vida es Sueño*, Fitzgeraldized as 'Such Stuff as Dreams are made of.' The hero, Segismund, by reason of a prophecy, is locked away by a foolish old King Lear, who, then, repenting of a possible injustice, tries an impossible remedy; Segismund is drugged, and awakes to find himself no longer in literal chains, but surrounded with the glitter and etiquette of a court. Dazed at first, then sobered by the cold douche of sudden power, he behaves reasonably enough, his native breeding coming to his help. Then, exasperated with new fetters of court custom and etiquette, and power going at last to his head, he goes wild and runs amok, even to the degree (horror of horrors) of kissing a princess in the open court. The play ends happily and lamely enough, with Segismund, who

has meanwhile been re-drugged and re-chained, but now is loose again and has won his spurs on the field, filching the not unwilling princess from his rival. But the picture of Segismund in the crisis of the play is a miracle of that rapid playwright, Calderon. Alexander was not locked up, but he was alienated from his father, and he was for some time an exile; and in the picture which his contemporaries projected there is much of the inconsequent wild moods of Segismund.

In the coming chapter begins the detailed story of Alexander's short life. It will be told without conscious reference – save here and there – to the views adumbrated in this Introduction. They will underlie the treatment of the facts which make up his life. But history will be allowed to pursue her own proper course, with this provision only, that history, and other sciences, are necessarily *chimaeræ bombinantes*, if not *in vacuo*, yet *in circulo*; a circle marked and made by their own laws and axioms. It is only philosophy which must break from all restraints and proceed forth *extra flammantia mœnia mundi*, coming back to tell us what things are real, and what stuff 'dreams are made on.'

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

CHAPTER I

A CONNECTED NARRATIVE OF ALEXANDER'S LIFE

THE present chapter contains, for purpose of reference, and as a series of pegs on which to hang the special comments which follow in later chapters (with some necessary repetition of the events), the 'traditional' story of Alexander. This is easy enough to find and relate. Nearly all modern writers give the same story. They vary in the weight attached to particular events. The process is practically one of 'conflation'; the various authorities, when they agree, are blended together; where they disagree, a rather uncritical choice, in the earlier biographers, a more critical choice, in the later, is made. Some recent biographers reject certain complete statements or events; W. W. Tarn rejects (for example) Barsine, supposed wife of Alexander, and their son Heracles, and the massacre of the Branchidæ; others reject the story of the Gordian knot – and so on. The fables of the False-Callisthenes are rejected *in toto* by all historians. Different pictures result in virtue of these rejections (there are not many reconstructions), and so certain scholars are dubbed (ridiculously enough) 'pro-' or 'anti-' Alexander. But the general substratum remains, and this forms the 'vulgate' or traditional story – largely based, in point of fact, on

Arrian, whose general sobriety, and personal respectability (of which he himself was very conscious) win adherents.

Before I give briefly this traditional story, I will put down, also briefly, the reasons why I believe the usual method to be erroneous, or rather, the fallacies, or 'eidola,' which seem to underlie its acceptance.

First there is the fallacy of enumeration. Even our greatest historians fall victims to this; nor is it quite unnatural. To be able to put down six 'authorities' to your adversaries' five or four seems to be a feather in your cap. But this fallacy is partly the result of (second) the fallacy of Equivalence of Facts; the idea, that is, that facts are units, each equal to each — whereas every fact is valuable or otherwise in accordance with both its nature and its pedigree. Does it suit its context (of other facts)? Is it in correspondence with its environment? And how does it reach us? Facts, which look so neat and orderly, may be on different planes, almost of different 'dimensions'; a fact found in a late and weak authority may be better and older than those of the oldest authorities; just as a late cursive manuscript may, when we know its history, be nearer to the original script than great and venerated uncials.

Then there is (third) the Fallacy of Fact versus Legend. There is indeed a line to be drawn here; but we can hardly say where. The 'False Callis-

thenes' tells us a foolish rigmarole of Nectanebos, the Egyptian, being actual father of Alexander, and his tutor to boot. Let us reject it, if we will; but within the foolish rigmarole there seems to lurk the fact that Alexander himself wanted to be anything but Macedonian, that he boasted descent from the Egyptian Ammon and apparently desired to be thought learned in the learning of the Egyptians. Just so the 'legend' of King Alfred and the cakes, relegated to children's books, gives us perhaps a truer picture of the brooding king, wrestling with his great problem, than any amount of scientific study will give us; while the whole story may well be literally true, down to the box on the ear. There may often be more 'fact' in honest credence than in half the critics.

Then there is (fourth) the Fallacy of Cause and Effect – which differ indeed in time, but are inextricably parts of one and the self-same process. In any case we must always speak not of cause, but of causes – myriad causes, perhaps; as of effects, and not effect (though there may well be one outstanding effect on which our attention is fixed). Bound up with this fallacy is the kindred fallacy – a most dangerous one – of ascribing motives. We can gauge, to some extent, externals; internals, rarely.

Then (fifth) is the fallacy of the *via media*. There is a natural temptation, when you have some authorities strong in one direction, others in another, to accept

some writer who seems to steer between the two. Yet this authority may represent only a feeble attempt at compromise; it may be ignorant; that it lies between extremes does not necessarily give it virtue.

Sixth is the Fallacy of Completeness. We want, naturally, to turn out a balanced, even, story. Where there is a gap, we tend to stretch such facts as we have to fill it. Better it were to leave the gap. Goethe is right in saying that History, when it was present act, was after all *Eitel Stückwerk*, sorry patchwork.

Last (seventh) comes the Dramatic Fallacy. We wish to be picturesque; the tale may be dull; we throw in something of our own dramatic instincts; there must be a hero, and if possible, a villain; there must be dramatic episodes; our characters, like those of a classical drama, must be reduced to consistency, must go on – more or less – to the end as they began; we forget too often that even in the drama the 'peripeteia' or 'reversal of what you might reasonably expect to follow' is a marked feature. Not woman only is *varium et mutabile;* we are each a Proteus; we hardly know ourselves; and how much more difficult to seize a hero of the past and stabilize him in any one of his phases. Hence the suspicion which must attach to summaries of Alexander as brave, or temperate, or a great general; those summaries which every historian attempts immediately after he has narrated his hero's death. Thirlwall on the one hand, and W. W.

Tarn (*Cambridge Ancient History*) on the other, are good examples of caution in this respect, though Thirlwall's zeal and admiration express themselves in one of his finest passages.

Let it not be thought that we are thus reduced to a feeble scepticism. It is not scepticism to weigh facts, to study them, and to realize that while the blaze of light from a host of authorities may be pleasing to us, what seems a little glow-worm light of some isolated 'fact' hidden in the leafage, nay, the garbage, of 'legend' may prove to be a lost and forgotten diamond.

Alexander was born in 356 B.C.; his father, Philip II of Macedon, was a self-made King, who had raised Macedon to a great power; his mother, Olympias, whom Philip had met as a girl at some religious initiation ceremony, was from Epirus, and of a wild orgiastic nature, which led her, even when queen, into strange barbaric vagaries. Alexander, kept till about his seventh year in the nursery, or the women's wing of the palace, was at the age of thirteen sent to Aristotle at Mieza for schooling; but as we hear of him at home now and then he must have had occasional holidays.[1] One of these home-incidents is prophetic; entertaining, as Crown Prince, some Eastern

[1] I do not trouble with his personal appearance. The books say he was fair-skinned and ruddy – one does not quite see how.

envoys, he 'pumped' them well as to the state of roads and communications in Western Persia.

In 336 Philip was assassinated; and Alexander at once took prompt steps to secure a throne to which the succession was strictly by election, not hereditary. Alexander's own rule was expressed by what are thought to be his last spoken words: 'To the strongest'; 'Might is right.'

Anxious to keep his subjects, already spoiling for warfare, busy, he made, after a progress through Greece, an important campaign on his northern borders, which he must secure before going eastward. Even these early operations are credited with some element of the miraculous; his troops were considered so well disciplined that they lay down, covered by their shields, and permitted heavy waggons to rumble over them. In the sphere of the miraculous lies also his sudden appearance – which false rumour had made almost a resurrection from the dead – before rebellious Thebes (335). This rebellion, most cruelly crushed, came very timely for Alexander. It enabled him to leave behind him at least the appearance of a cowed Greece; a Greece, at least, which could no longer make war on Macedon, but only, like Thebes, rebel, and be treated, like Thebes, as rebellious. In the Greek submissions there was probably more of cunning than cowardice. Athens, at least, conscious of her own unquenchable resilience, bided her time.

All went according to plan and programme. The Northern tribes, and Southern Greece, now accounted for, Alexander could, and did, work eastward, where a force, formerly under Parmenion, already held valuable points on the Hellespont.

Alexander set out with comparatively few troops and certainly little money, late in 335. From the first there was a strong element of 'legitimate war-gamble' in the expedition, a gamble marvellously justified. His inadequate army was highly trained, and organized with a most unusual completeness. Its chief strength lay in its long pikes and in its commander. After a certain amount of theatrical business at Troy (no doubt as much from policy as impulse – sometimes, with Alexander, it is impulse improved by policy) came the cavalry engagement of the River Granicus (334), fought contrary to all correct tactics, and perhaps therefore successful; so successful, indeed, that Alexander now relied only on his army and disbanded his distant and expensive fleet.

The battle, however, and the Homeric performances which had preceded it, quite failed to upset the caution and suspicion of Greece, especially of Athens. It became clear even in the moment of victory that Alexander and Macedon must play a lone hand. In discarding his fleet ('burning his boats' is the favourite expression) Alexander was really ridding himself of very doubtful maritime assistance.

A rather tedious reduction of the Asian coast followed. The capture of Halicarnassus showed that there was nothing wrong with Alexander's siege operations or appliances.

Thence he made a curious northward sweep to Gordium – probably not so much to fulfil the 'oracle of the knot' as to impress the Persian governors in the interior of Asia Minor – a mixture of policy and what one is inclined to call foolery to be practised again later, especially in Egypt.

Thence he comes southward for his critical battle which was bound, by all the laws of the game, to take place at or near Issus. The strategy of this battle is discussed later. Meanwhile it may be well to note that Alexander seems to have clearly lured Dareius from the plain into the narrows – taking thereby himself a great risk – and to have manœuvred so as to have his Macedonians fighting with their faces set homewards. That Alexander won and won handsomely is not in question. That he fought rashly is probably true; he certainly exposed the flanks of his phalanx, and the phalanx, however effective, needed much protecting. Dareius' hasty flight may have had some strategy in it; certainly Alexander's hasty pursuit might have lost him the day, and though usually quick to learn, and to repair his errors, he repeated this one, in a greater degree, at Gaugamela.

Of this victory the chief fruits were not Dareius'

women but the treasures of Damascus, of which Alexander stood in pressing need.

It is quite difficult to account for Alexander's siege of and severity to Tyre, excellent naval base though it was for his enemies. He was fighting on land and his communications were overland. He had – for the present – deliberately chosen to ignore naval power; those grapes, indeed, were sour. He may have feared that even a conciliated Tyre would be a serpent which might sting him from behind; he may have thought of Greek mercenaries finding a way through Tyre to the nearest Persian concentration. Anyhow, he struck hard at Tyre and at Gaza, justifying his severity to the one on religious grounds, and to the other, it seems, on his personal dislike of its brave defender. Tyre fell (332), Gaza, after three months, fell also; Alexandreia in Egypt was founded to carry off their commerce.

Alexander's brief tour in Egypt was rather a tour than not. Here alone he fought nobody; he went sightseeing, oracle-visiting, not even advancing up the Nile beyond Memphis. Alexander, in fact, had no use for a people who would not stand up to him save to win a mysterious prestige from their subservience. It must be owned that the wily Egyptians 'played up' to the distinguished tourist; nothing could could have been done better than the solemn merry-makings at the oasis of Ammon (or Siwah).

Alexander left Memphis in 331 and stopped at Tyre, to assure himself, we may think, that no harm lurked there. Thence, satisfied, he really began the great Eastward march, and in Napoleonic way made straight for the new Persian army concentrated near the Tigris. Save for the lie of the ground, Gaugamela (331) was an intensified Issus. Alexander, fearing he might not, again, sufficiently protect his phalanx, so arrayed the phalanx as to protect itself. Moreover, by seeming to threaten a night attack, he instilled in the Persians almost as much panic as such an attack would have occasioned. Shock tactics on his right, the stout Parmenion set to hold his ground on the left, an uncautious pursuit – here we have the main features of a battle even more gloriously successful, in its total results, than that of Issus; it broke Dareius, which Issus had not done; henceforth Persia was divided, and an army in force was no longer to be feared. Babylon and Susa lay open: and what was more, Persepolis. Alexander was now a millionaire. The sacking of Persepolis town was followed later by some burning of a royal palace or palaces, no doubt cleared beforehand of movable valuables. The 'Revenge' Motive was now definitely added to the other romantic, heroic, hereditary, religious, and crusading motives which Alexander had thrown out hitherto as baits for the frigid and cautious Greeks. Not with salt of that sort would Minerva's owl be taken; yet

the massacre of the Branchidæ, a little later on, was another deep giving out of this same Vengeance 'motif.'

Dareius dead and Bessus, his supplanter, a fugitive, Alexander could now pose, and did now pose, as Lord of Asia. The miserable fate of the miserable Bessus will not here detain us, as his pursuit did detain Alexander; but an episode is important, as casting a shadow before of events to come, namely, the revolt of Satibarzanes (330), which showed that 'government of Persians for Persians by Persians' was not going to be a workable system. And yet Alexander was not now easy with his Macedonians, nor they with him; since at Prophthasia, south of Herat (perhaps one of Alexander's foundations), there occurred what may have been the judicial condemnation of Philotas and what certainly was the savage murder of Parmenio his father. This is indeed a critical event in Alexander's career. It was a 'dropping of the pilot' into the sea.

A glance at a map of Alexander's route will show (what would in any case seem obvious) that this was, after Gaugamela, largely dictated by convenience of mountain valleys, and later, of rivers, where Alexander could get water and food for his force. Not till the end does Alexander cross desert, save only in Egypt and on the way from Tyre to the Euphrates. To Persepolis, and through Persepolis, he had fol-

lowed the line of the mountains which themselves run parallel to the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf. He picks up the ranges which border the Caspian, on the south, and follows these to their eastern end, thence he makes for the Murghat valley and pursues this southward till he gets a northward valley line through Kabul; the mountains here he coasts, on their western side, and it is hard to see any motive which takes him along the Polytimetos valley and back, and up through Sarmakand to the Sir Darya, save the convenience of the route, which on the Sir Darya, indeed, led him up to a 'blind alley.' Back he comes, through Bactra, along the Kophen valley, goes up to Aornos for no special reason – perhaps it seemed a likely valley-route, – and then marches on parallel to the general trend of the Kashmir ranges, till he is brought up short on the Hyphasis. This time he takes the great Indus valley, his fleet going with him. This rough summary may explain the apparent inconsequence of Alexander's routes. They almost remind us of the Swiss 'Voyages en Zigzag' traced by an inky beetle; but this eagerness to avoid plains, and zealousness to use mountain foothills and valleys, seems to have dictated the greater part of the route, of which a good deal was, from the imperial point of view, waste.

Into Bactria, at all events, Alexander goes, possibly founding Kandahar on the turn of his road. He

reached territory fruitful enough in food and in horse in Bactriana and Sogdiana; and this may well have accounted for Alexander's obvious anxiety to retain these northern provinces, and his storming of their hill-forts. At Maracanda, on his return, came the unfortunate episode of the murder of Cleitus; at Bactra, also on the return, came the almost more unfortunate murder of the philosopher Callisthenes.

It was somewhere where his route, following the Kophen (or 'Kabul') valley, reached its there most northern point, that the famous storming of Aornos took place – famous chiefly for the discussions which it has aroused rather than for any strategic importance of the place. It merely looks as if Alexander still wanted to keep north, and found in the valley, in which 'Aornos' was, a promising-looking route; indeed, the Indus, just about at this point of his route, flows through or round the Kashmir mountains. Take 'Aornos' he did; but for some reason this northern route, which indeed would have led to nowhere, did not entice Alexander farther. That he entertained hopes of going farther seems clear from the episode of the city Nysa, somewhere north of the Kabul river. Alexander's enthusiasm over Nysa, fostered by the not uncunning populace, was probably used by himself as a lure to carry with him his troops on this northern route. But wisdom, or their murmurs, prevailed.

I / Anthony Provenzano

The Indus was crossed (326) above Attock, and then came the rather unnecessary eastern march over the heads of the Indus tributaries; unnecessary for Alexander's conquests, which had covered a greater stretch than he could now administer, and foolish even for his explorations, since he expected to find soon in the east (as he had perhaps expected to find both in Sogdiana, and through the Aornos valley, to the north) the broad encircling stream of Ocean, on which he hoped to sail home. The 'passive resistance' of his troops on the Sutlej (or Beas) put an end to all this; and no amount of prayers, persuasions, or geography lectures, would cause the men to budge further, despite the victorious battle (326) with Porus, on the Hydaspes. Alexander had not set governors over Porus' kingdom, but handed it back to its king, who proved loyal enough; but India did not long form part of the Macedonian Empire. The return march led the weary troops first to Nicaia, the new city named to commemorate the victory, and Boucephalia, commemorating Alexander's charger. The fleet which Alexander's foresight had ordered was a-building, and the start was made, with much pomp, in November of 326. A fierce if brief campaign took place against the Mallians (and others) who might have barred the way, if united. Alexander's own temerity and the serious wound received at their capital endeared him anew to his homeward

bound troops. But the worst, or nearly the worst, of the journey was still to come. Tied to his fleet – which indeed seems now to have bulked larger in Alexander's mind than his army – Alexander must needs take his men along the coast through Gedrosia, in heat and desolation, among waterless stretches where thorns and snakes abounded. Those who did not fall out and die reached the more fruitful land of Carmania, and arrived at length at Susa. But what was more, the fleet, for whom the army had suffered so much, came somehow safe to port.

Alexander had several severe blows to bear when he got in touch again with civilization. Persian and Macedonian officers had grievously misbehaved; the rather haphazard organization of Asia had already broken down. Yet Alexander stuck to his idea of amalgamating East and West – rather to the detriment, it must be said, of West. When he produced his new Persian troops and actually brigaded them with his Macedonians, there was trouble. When he offered to pay the private debts of his men, there were suspicions. When he insisted on wholesale intermarriage with Persian women there was, indeed, temporary compliance; but the marriages were for the most part temporary also. The Greeks did not, in fact, show that enthusiasm and that humility which Alexander expected of them. When Alexander deified himself and sent messages requiring proper hon-

ours, the Spartans replied, 'We have no objection to Alexander calling himself what he pleases.'

There is no purpose in speculating what might have happened had Alexander determined that these and such words should be eaten by their utterers. What did happen was that Alexander resting (324), at the Median capital, Ecbatana, was thrown into violent grief by the death of his favourite Hephaestion, and though he recovered enough to attack a mountain tribe on the borders, and to make sundry explorations of the Babylonian canal-system, and sundry plans for the future, Alexander's work was done. An illness of the sort he had been through before, perhaps aggravated by wine, and by the unhealthiness of the canals, certainly aggravated during its course by his own obstinacy and apparently by want of medical attention, carried him off in June (323) at the age of thirty-two. He is said to have taken the ring from his finger and given it to Perdiccas; but that alone gave any clue to his plans for his vast empire. Probably, despite omens, he had refused to contemplate death.

Such in bare outline is the story of Alexander, as built up by 'conflation' of the authorities (nearly all late) with a strong leaning to the 'good' tradition of Arrian, though this tradition is known to be based largely upon official sources. The story runs, on the whole, smoothly, and a reasonably coherent picture of

Alexander arises from it, though its followers must tell us, on perhaps successive pages, that Alexander's last illness was largely helped by a drinking bout, and yet he was no drinker; that he married at least three, and perhaps, four wives, and yet set an example of continence. Those who follow this story in the main must elevate Alexander at the expense of Greece, and urge that the Greeks lost freedom only because they were slaves.

CHAPTER II

ALEXANDER'S EARLY TRAINING

If ever a really great man began his career as the dwarf on the giant's shoulders, it was Alexander, destined himself to dwarf the giant, which was the gathered strength of Macedon, absorbing the best in now-decaying Greece, and summed up in a real genius, Philip. Macedon had retained much of that early spirit, and much of the simple but eminently workable constitution, which we call Homeric. Even Homeric titles seem to have been retained; the word 'Companions,' with its bye-forms 'Foot-Companions' and 'Civilian-Companions' is thought to bear, sometimes, at least, its old Homeric interpretation. Nay, the phalanx, the use of which Macedon partly learned from Thebes, was as old as Homer and represented an obvious employ of stalwart men armed with stout and lengthy spears, forming a sort of human fortification (Homer calls the formation 'tower-like').

In various ways therefore Macedon was Homeric; and as far as the modern word may rightly be applied was feudal. The kingship was really a chieftainship – it could be elective; at any rate there was no certainty about the succession, as may be seen by the removal of any possible candidates – the infant Caranus, for instance – by Alexander himself. The

old picture of a barbarous Macedon beside a cultured Greece is all along erroneous; people of plains generally civilize quickly; certainly more quickly than hillmen or dalesmen; and though the elevation of the Macedonian court into a little Weimar, in the time of Archelaus, may have been premature, Macedonia was already setting a standard of culture, and was ready to become in the time of Alexander a genuine centre of philosophic, scientific, and literary activity. The thing perhaps which most strikes us about Alexander is that he had appreciated the joys of education highly enough to carry off with him, by force or persuasion, the leading scientists, military and other, of Northern Greece; and we have thus a rare picture – to be seen again in Napoleon's expedition to Egypt – of a great world-conqueror haling about with him several respectable University Faculties, and working them hard all the time. Alexander's advance was the expedition of an exploring and collecting party as well as an irresistible military push.

But we must revert to Philip. Hogarth has wisely emphasized what earlier historians, in their zeal for origins, causes, and mechanisms of historical evolution, have tended to obscure, namely, the divisions among the Macedonians of the beginning of Philip's time. Hillmen are often difficult subjects. Greeks were brought in to help, and even Persians. But

discord and a certain amount of poverty were the marks of Macedonia, and it is Alexander himself at Opis who graphically sketches Philip's work as pacifier, civilizer, and enricher, at least, if we are to believe Arrian, become rhetorical for the occasion.

A Macedonian king could, however, take a strong line when he felt safe enough to do so. The idea, at least, of kingship was absolute enough; and the people were perfectly ready to take the most serious view of royalty. When Philip, and after him Alexander, had made good his position, nothing could be more submissive than the Macedonians. They were quite ready, later on, to 'kow-tow' to Alexander as a Persian emperor; the younger men, at least. The older men were loyal to a degree, but not quite to this degree. But the main thing is that the Macedonian farmers and traders were quite ready to see their sovereign exalted to any height, reasonable or unreasonable, and that Alexander responded to this extravagant feeling in the most extravagant way, whether by his assumption of divine parentage, his Persian fashions, or his conscious parallel of himself with Heracles and Dionysus, whose exploring footsteps he followed. If we are inclined to accuse Alexander of quite ridiculous pretension and ostentation, let us remember that popular idea expected something of this kind of him.

Such rights as the Macedonians had they guarded

jealously. These rights were like the *Fors* of feudal Aquitaine, keenly watched, zealously maintained. Traces of these rights appear in the Alexander story, and Alexander did not venture to neglect or dispute them. There was some right of trial of peers by their peers; Philotas was thus brought before his equals; and even Bessus, in whose punishment Alexander showed as great cruelty in cold blood as he ever did in hot blood, was, in the Macedonian fashion, brought before 'the assembly,' and later on sent to the Medes to be finally dealt with.

Philip's work in unifying was greater perhaps than his work in civilizing; the one came rather of itself, the other only came hardly. He made grades of military honour, and instituted rewards and privileges for good service. Much of this craftsmanship, as much of his military organization itself, Philip seems to have learnt from Thebes, where he had been a hostage, but no advantages of education must dim Philip's claim to native inventiveness and natural power. Philip was indeed a 'wild northerner' only in vigour and clear-headedness. He had that balance which as we get farther we shall feel that Alexander lacked, and curious Mendelians will see in the wild impulsiveness of Alexander a double portion of his mother's spirit. For he was son of the Epirote princess Olympias, whom historians unite to designate 'wild,' or even 'termagant.' Philip had

met her at some boy-and-girl initiation ceremony. As queen she went her own ways, and is even said to have turned Bacchanal from time to time, and roamed with a mænad train through the mountains. In any case, Alexander certainly displays less of Philip's 'canniness' than of the impulsiveness of Olympias, and even less and less, as he grows older. Yet much, whether grateful or not, he did inherit, and much he did learn from Philip, whose bluff good-fellowship alternates in Alexander with the proud aloofness of Olympias. Philip's character we have as sketched by his great adversary, Demosthenes. It was Philip who reorganized the Macedonian levies, it was Philip who, persuaded of the need, or advisability, of the *Drang nach Osten*, educated up his people to the thought of the great expedition with a modern thoroughness. The pretext of vengeance must always have been absurd. Nations do not really nurse vengeances for so many years, and Greece had no very violent quarrel against Persia, of whom she had rid herself fairly cheaply. Isocrates, the 'old man eloquent,' if with an eloquence rather the fruit of labour than of passion, wrote an 'open letter' to encourage Philip to head Greece against Asia, as he had before appealed to Sparta and Athens, in his *Panegyric*, to lead the rest of Greece. It was an obvious notion; peace at any price, better to perish in Asia than in Greece, better

at the hand of Asiatics than of Hellenes – the thoughts ran glibly, if the old man's pen worked slowly. But the cry of vengeance was a useful one, and a better cry to catch the groundlings than that 'Culture' which went along with it. It is vain to suppose that Alexander inherited from his father a genuine Persian 'hate.' There is no oath of Hannibal in this story. The superman ideas of Philip Alexander did indeed inherit, and they helped him towards his own even more intense self-exaltation; but the Eastern move was dictated by a great many matured ideas quite apart from any foolish notions of punishing Persia. As it was not a punitive expedition, so it was not a 'biological' invasion; it was not caused by a periodical overflow of population, it was not suggested by any desire for places in the sun, and it was not actually necessary to Macedonian trade. But Greece was stale, poor, dull, and Alexander went to the East to find new lands, new wealth, new interests.

One of Philip's many great qualities was his patience. Greek states had flashed into power, and when in power had been in a mighty hurry; so we get the fleeting 'hegemonies.' About Macedon there is something of the *patiens quia æternus*. Philip might never go eastward; but Macedon would. Greek wars were but a practice ground for eastern victories.

If Alexander was an example of moral purity, and

(with certain exceptions) of temperance, as some of his panegyrists maintain, he had gone a long way from the example of Philip and the manners of Philip's court. Strong man, and great man, as Philip was, his court must have been the scene of much irregularity and turmoil, and it was well for Alexander that he was for some years away at school under Aristotle. The turmoil was brought to a climax when Philip practically repudiated Olympias, and set Cleopatra in her place.

Such was the court in which the young Alexander, born in 356, when Philip had yet twenty years to reign, grew, such was his home. He must have taken banishment from it light-heartedly; and perhaps we can see a further reason for his Eastern exploration in his satiety of a court of which he might appreciate perhaps the wilder elements but could not endure the pettinesses and intrigues. We may see perhaps in his sternness and self-control in the field (exaggerated by historians to a standing characteristic of his whole career) a conscious revolt against Philip's excesses. He never seems to have acknowledged openly his own debt to Philip's masterly powers of organization and unification; it was, however, an enormous debt, and those historians who (like Beloch, who will not have Alexander first-rate either as general or as statesman, or Rostovtzeff, who dismisses Alexander's 'romantic exploits' as

serious only in their indirect results) consider Philip the greater man of the two, are not hastily to be set aside.

It may be regarded as one of the paradoxes of historical criticism that the simple and childish stories so often told about the childhood of great men are more likely to be true than more elaborate stories of their later life. More than this, it may be hazarded that in all legends, or legend-like tales, there is an essential element of *naïveté*, whether in the stories themselves, or in the narratives which enshrine them, whose absence and presence will be a fairly sure test of truth or fiction. Stories which are 'written up' as illustrative of a known character, or stories which, resulting from etymological confusions or from the blending of nature – or cult – myths, become attached to certain historical characters, are usually recognizable. The early Alexander stories are of a simple and popular kind, and it is to their greater credit that they are few. We may then reconstruct certain scenes of Alexander's early life with some likelihood.

Till he was about eight Alexander would live with the women: that is to say, till the date of the fall of Olynthus. His genuine affection for his mother is shown throughout his life – he liked her better, it is true, when she did not meddle with matters of state; he seems to have had more trust in the political

discretion of his sister Cleopatra. Probably then Alexander's childhood, spent with his mother, who seems to have early become rather isolated from the Court, was happy, and reflected itself in happy recollections. His nurse, or head-nurse, Lanice, or Hellanice, was of noble birth, and her brother, Cleitus, was certainly a close friend. The actual tending of the boy would be the work of slave-women.

Whether Olympias ever took her child with her on any of her Bacchic revels, and whether Lanice was – as we should suppose – a strong counteracting influence to that of his wild mother, we can only surmise. But if Alexander was ever witness of these 'orgies,' we can then rather imagine that there was some truth in the report of his later revellings.[1]

At eight years a boy was usually handed over to a tutor – though he was still housed, no doubt, in the women's wing. This did not mean instruction, as yet, or not necessarily so; but something of letters and easy reading might reasonably be picked up in the women's quarters, and Alexander was certainly a precocious scholar.

These years, between the ages of nine and thirteen, are just those about which we should most wish to know more. Lanice would probably give up

[1] In Carmania, after his terrible homeward march across the Gedrosian desert.

her charge when the 'tutor' took over. Whatever else the boy Alexander learnt at this time, he would learn a good deal about outdoor sports, hunting and riding; and the story of the taming of Bucephalas may be so far true that Alexander did indeed show skill and courage in dealing with a young and fiery charger; that it was Bucephalas, is a matter of dates; for if the age of Bucephalas is correctly reported at the date of his death, he must at the supposed date of his mastering by Alexander have been already an aged animal.

With the next story of Alexander's boyhood we are almost on the edge of his manhood; namely, his entertaining, in the absence of Philip, certain Persian ambassadors, and his rather eager inquiries about Persian roads and transport. This incident bears a likelihood of truth about it; unless Alexander had completed his schooling with Aristotle, it must have occurred during a leave or holiday; its interest lies not so much in the inquisitiveness of the young prince as in the responsibilities laid thus early, in Philip's absence, upon him, as Crown Prince. The reputed answer to Aristotle that he would not discuss hypothetical questions – he had been asked, 'What would you do, Alexander, if . . .' – looks more like a story written up to Alexander's known character; and with it should perhaps be classed the various stories of smart or epigrammatic replies, 'So

would I, were I Parmenio'; and 'I will not steal a victory.'

The child is, no doubt, father of the Man; but it is with the Man we are concerned. These fleeting glimpses of the young Alexander at work or play, with the gloomy picture of the drunken Philip, and Alexander's unfilial taunt, of the family brawl at Philip's wedding-feast, when Cleopatra was brought in to oust Olympias, these must suffice to suggest that one nursed and nurtured in such a Court was not likely to be a wholly stable or consistent character. It is a triumph to Olympias, Aristotle, and Alexander, that he grew up a man of will and energy and purpose, of scientific zeal, and of highly enlightened political views.

Alexander had private tutors whom the boy John Stuart Mill might well have envied. Leonidas, of the Epirote race and family of Olympias (be it well noted), was his early tutor, and both Leonidas and Lysimachus, his other tutor or attendant, taught him to know (it was not necessary to teach him to love) Homer. At ten years old, as Aeschines, the actor and declaimer, tells us, he stood up and recited his piece before Aeschines, Demosthenes, and the other Athenian envoys, and also with a school-fellow (perhaps his 'whipping boy'), who may have been his foster-brother Proteas, performed a dialogue from a Greek play.

No Englishman can ever appreciate what a thorough training in Homer meant to a Greek boy. Sometimes Homer is called the Greek Bible – but there is all the gulf that parts Hellenism from Hebraism between Homer and even the most Homeric passages of the Old Testament. If we, in our ordinary school curricula, received a thorough training in the works of Spenser or Shakespeare, if we would quote large passages, discussed them together, grew to quote them in public, lived in, and up to them; we might get a faint idea of what a thorough training in Homer meant to a Greek boy. It is in some ways a great advantage to any age to be an age of one book; the nearest parallel to Greece and Homer is perhaps Italy and Dante. Homer, we must remember, was Debrett, Lord Chesterfield, Froissart, Spenser, much Scott, much of the Old Testament, the *Idylls of the King*, some Browning – in his simpler philosophizings – and a good deal else rolled together; that is, Homer, as he was then understood and taught. To Alexander it may have been more Froissart than the rest, but we can well understand his love for Homer. As for Achilles, the utterly brave, utterly passionate, utterly childish hero, he was Alexander to the life, or Alexander, perhaps, not unconsciously, became Achilles to the life. So much then for Alexander's chief text-book; but this was not all his training, into

the details of which I do not mean to enter, since one may so easily prove or seek to prove too much. Since we are here concerned rather with formative ideas, and since these ideas represent to us the prevalent ideas and ideals of the day, and since these all did perform their part both in shaping the real Alexander, and also coloured contemporary pictures of the ideal Alexander, we must consider them in their broader aspects. But let two great principles always be remembered; first, every one is really self-educated; *magister intus docet*; and second – to borrow an expression from Bishop Butler,[1] though not in his original context – in all education it is the 'passive impressions' and not the 'active impressions' which really mould the pupil; not (*experto crede*) what we seek to 'inculcate' but what we allow to steal into our instructions, this holds firm and builds character, since the pupil's mind bristles up in conscious or unconscious opposition whenever he feels he is being 'taught,' but is peculiarly receptive when taken unawares. As for what Alexander taught himself, we can guess only from his heredity and from his mature actions; as for these 'passive impressions,' this 'atmosphere,' we can know something, at least. Over against the influence of his mother, which we imagine to have been turbulent, stimulating, perhaps irritating (though even 'wild harridans' can be tender

[1] *Analogy*, i. 8.

to their children), there is the more gracious influence of Lanice, whom the Great Conqueror, in a moment of abasement and penitence, remembered tenderly, as the gentler King René remembered his nurse Théphaine in his charming epitaph on her in the church of Nantilly, near Saumur. Then comes the Spartan regimen, mental and physical, of Leonidas; and here the interest is that the ideal of education in Macedonia was the Spartan type, which bred if not orators and dramatists, at least musicians and brave men; and then at twelve or thirteen came school at Mieza, with a group of other boys, under Aristotle, then aged about forty. One is inclined to draw fanciful pictures of this school. The unknown quantity will be Aristotle's assistants, besides the tutors whom the boys would bring with them. Certainly Aristotle himself does not appear quite the teacher for a group of high-spirited boys between thirteen and eighteen; and Alexander's later detachment from Aristotle, not to put it more harshly, may seem to show that he did not credit his master with being even a 'just beast.' One thing seems fairly clear; either as a revolt from the repressive teaching of Leonidas and Aristotle, or possibly owing to genuine inspiration from Aristotle, Alexander lost all that pessimism which had been the dark thread through Greek history, and saw the Golden Age ahead (as did his contemporaries) and not in the past,

not even in his loved Homer. As to the subjects which Alexander studied, they are given, perhaps correctly, in Pseudo-Callisthenes, as 'grammar, music, geometry, rhetoric, and philosophy'; this last, learnt from Aristotle, would no doubt include the usual gradations of physical science, dialectic and logic, metaphysics, ethics, theology; ethics including what we call 'civics,' then called 'politics.' Of interest in physical science we get definite traces in Alexander's later life, even though it be his curious notion that the Indus and Nile were continuous, on the ground (of which Captain Fluellen's words may be a dim parody), that there were crocodiles in both.[1]

Here at any rate we must leave the few facts, and the speculations which are rather tempting than profitable, about Alexander's education. We do learn at least something of the general idea held in Macedon at this period as to the requisites of a gentleman's education.

It was after his schooling at Mieza that Alexander came into the limelight of public life.

At Perinthus when seventeen, in 339, he was with the troops. He also founded a city, thus 'getting his hand in' early. Aristotle wrote him later on a Tract on Colonization, and Alexander in his city-foundings

[1] Arrian, vi, 1, confirmed by Strabo. But the idea had something in it, starting from the ideas of the day (see p. 183).

is evidently working on a plan, perhaps Aristotle's own, for Alexander always respected Aristotle's omniscience, and helped him with grants and men in his zoological and other work. In these athletic days when we show a more than Greek enthusiasm for rather ungreek athletic methods, it may please certain readers to know that the young Alexander was both a good runner and was as good, at a sort of fives, as the fives-champion of the day.

A murder brought Alexander to the throne. The long-nursed hatred of Pausanias, a young noble, against Attalus, was turned in some way against Philip, who had not only refused to punish Attalus, but had actually married his niece. The opportunity came when, at his daughter's wedding, Philip sent on his body-guard into the theatre, trusting to the general good-will and festivity of the occasion. All was as merry as a marriage-bell as Philip passed onwards in his holiday robes. Pausanias, with means of flight prepared, rushed upon him, stumbled, and was slain, but his dagger had also done its work. Whoever was Pausanias' real instigator, the crime was laid at the doors of the sons of Aeropus; two, with other conspirators, were put to death; and the murder (by Olympias, so far as we can judge) of Cleopatra and her child, made all smooth, at the beginning, for the new King.

But these savage incidents were hardly fitted to

produce the serene and godlike Alexander of his admirers. They would rather make possible, not to say natural, the execution of his *aide* Philotas and the murder of his old counsellor Parmenio; they must have created, or fostered, a most uneasy and suspicious character in the new ruler, already endowed with the wildness of his Bacchanal mother. Those who readily deny the tale of Alexander's Bacchic revels forget perhaps that the thing was in his blood, and that the joy of victory, or the release from the stress of an anxious march, might quite well have inspired Alexander to repeat scenes not unknown to his boyhood.

Estrangement with Philip had perhaps long begun, for neither Philip nor Alexander could brook rivals, and Philip, if Alexander's father and king, was in the way of his ambitions. Alexander fought well and bravely at Chaeroneia, a battle not altogether 'fatal to liberty'; but a little later there is clear proof of estrangement between father and son in Philip's repudiation of Olympias for Cleopatra; and it is to this brief period, up to Philip's death, that the parallel suggested above with Calderon's Prince Segismund may seem best to apply. Certain it is that Alexander, in later life, rejected Philip's parentage (with many of his ideas and standards), and thoug hit is most unlikely that Alexander had any direct hand in the plot to murder Philip, yet his mother's possible

complicity might well involve him also in dark and unwhispered suspicions.

But whatever Alexander's own feelings towards Philip were, and whether or not in seeming to put on the God, he really was trying to put off the Philip, neither he nor anyone else could deny Philip his vigorous character and his remarkable achievements. With these we cannot here be further concerned. Dr. Hogarth's book has brought out Philip's greatness; and so have other recent historians. He was not an attractive character, but he had purpose and he understood method. He had himself planned the Eastern expedition; and while we may attribute to Alexander a certain element in romance in looking forward to, and in undertaking it, we can rarely attribute to Philip anything but coldly-calculated policy. What then were Philip's motives? For therein alone shall we see the genesis of his son's expedition. Almost certainly not revenge; Philip would not waste time and money in vengeance for century-old wrongs done not to his own State, but to those which he had himself subdued. Almost certainly not mere honour and glory; Philip could have enough of that without so much trouble. Was there perhaps economic pressure? Not indeed as far as corn, and the ordinary necessities of life went, since, if other states of Greece, and especially Athens, went regularly short, Macedon, at all events, grew crops enough and to spare.

Nor was it wholly a question of capturing trade; Macedon was not, as yet, a trading community; and had not the imperious need which Athens had, of making up for her shortage of corn by manufactures and by middlemen's profits. Some general pressure no doubt there was; Greece needed a new colonizing epoch, and their trend lay eastward. But even this hardly applied to Macedon. No doubt a general desire of foreign markets, a general impression of eastern riches, may have weighed with Philip. But probably the deciding factor was the problem of the mercenaries. Greece was sending her soldiers of fortune, all over the East, to Persia especially. Philip therefore found himself reigning over almost an empty shell; all that was most stalwart in Greece was abroad. Philip saw a way partly to keep these warriors nearer home, partly to use them himself; to use them indeed so to open out new sources of riches that they would not need to go and seek fortune as soldiers of fortune, but share in the general prosperity of that new Greece over which Philip would be Lord Paramount. To do this, Persia must be politically crushed, and her treasure houses thrown open; no great task, perhaps; and, in any case and by any means, the dangerous absurdity must be removed by which Greece was shedding her own blood to keep alive her traditional enemy.

Thus, perhaps, it was that Philip's policy so completely paved the way for Alexander's romance.

How far Aristotle definitely and directly urged the Asian expedition we cannot say. But Aristotle had his own grievances, if not against Persia itself, – which he despised – at least against the Greeks who fought for Persia, and of these especially Mentor, who had treated with harshness Hermeias, the friend of Philip as well as friend and pupil of Aristotle; seizing him in his city of Atarneus by treachery, and sending him to the Great King, who lost no time in putting him to death.

Whatever truth there was in the motive of revenge for the Persian treatment of Athens, there were causes enough for private revenge which further asperated Macedonians already disturbed by the unblushing way in which the Greek free companies were bolstering up the enemy power of Persia.

CHAPTER III

ALEXANDER AND HIS ARMY

The army of Alexander was Philip's army, reorganized in a masterly way from the old Macedonian 'Reichswehr.' I do not go here into details, since they may be had in Hogarth's book, where his views are modified in some respects from his earlier paper on the subject. The essential point is that Philip's army was (as Alexander's was ultimately to be) a blend, or rather two blends; first, of the Macedonians proper and the subject tribes, and secondly, of the military and the civil elements in the Macedonians themselves. The civil element may not have been volunteer, but there was some voluntary element about it, and it was induced to take soldiering seriously by an elaborate system of rewards. The 'Companions' were probably territorially arranged troops, 'comrades' together, from certain districts. Certainly some cavalry squadrons were named from their territory. The infantry also had a 'Royal' regiment or corps. Then there was a special force of Foot-Guards, called 'spearmen.' So despite Alexander's delight in isolation in battle, and his Homeric joy in 'hewing his way through,' he was, on paper, as closed in by inner and outer circles of personal guards as ever was a queen bee in her hive. Questions arise, not here to be resolved, how a mounted commander-

in-chief could be closely attended on the field, as Alexander certainly was on occasions, by Foot-Guards. Bravery was properly rewarded, not only by promotion to one of these distinguished corps, but also, very properly, by extra pay; Arrian tells us of a 'ten-stater man.'

For managing large numbers of men, an uncontrollable temper is better than an iron will. One can forecast what the will may do; one cannot forecast where the temper may lead. This is especially true when a commander is taking troops far from their homes and into new spheres of undreamed difficulties.

Alexander was fortunate in having both. Moreover, his uncontrolled temper often arose at or from some festive gathering when he had been condescending to be an equal among equals. This gave a special element of uncertainty; the boon companion of one moment might be the murderer, or the murderous judge, of the next.

Berve's laborious work on Alexander and Alexander's kingdom or empire has collected such details as help us to reconstruct the different circles which surrounded Alexander's Court or his Headquarters, for indeed it is at times rather difficult to be sure which word we ought to employ. As a rule, in the field, Alexander is the busy Commander-in-chief, with his army council and his executive officers all about him;

his tent or billet watched by the Guards of the King's Person, and attended by the Pages (with slaves for the menial work – 'bedmakers' and 'cooks' are mentioned). But during long stays in the towns, and generally, towards the latter part of his short life, the Headquarters became a Court, as elaborate and perhaps as ceremonious as the Court of a French king. Alexander, in any case, must have been always a rather uncertain quantity; for at one time he is all for comradeship and good-fellowship, at another he is aloof and majestic; at one moment he is demanding Oriental 'adoration,' and at another he is almost degrading himself by schoolboy hilarity, or quite degrading himself by open drunkenness. How far, therefore, the organization, which has all the appearance of a set and formal Court organization, was merely elastic, tightened or relaxed, according to Alexander's moods; or how far the merely sordid and the merely barbaric lurked behind a good deal of apparent elaboration and splendour, we cannot say. My own view remains that in Alexander we have the primitive alternating with the heir of the ages, and that all surrounding him were bound to take their colouring from himself.

In the inner circle, at least, we have slaves, under their particular supervisors, the 'household' slaves, who did the tidying, the bedmaking, and so on. After Alexander's marriage with Roxane, and perhaps be-

fore, there would be special attendants, and women attendants, attached to the household. The actual waiting on the King, the care of his horses, the assisting of him into the saddle, and many other outdoor duties, as well as the general watching of his sleeping-place, was entrusted to the Royal Pages, sons of Macedonian nobles, who formed a travelling Officers Training Corps. They were mounted, and joined in the King's sports, of which hunting, where game was available, was chief. The discipline of this Corps was vested directly in the King, who punished either by bodily chastisement or temporary degradation (loss of the horse). From the so-called 'Conspiracy of the Pages' it becomes clear that the Pages were a body to be reckoned with; that – though themselves young – they were of the old school, and resented Alexander's 'Persianizing' ways. This is a most important point; since, if Alexander really failed to carry along with him these youths, attached to his own service, it suggests that much less had he carried along with him the older Macedonians. This is the more true, because to his punishments Alexander united handsome rewards to Pages for good service shown.

Next above the Pages came the Guards of the Person. Of these Guards several are known by name. This was an old feudal institution; only those of good birth and known trustworthiness held it. Presumably, in origin, the idea was that the Guards must be

landowners or sons of landowners, so that their land might be a sort of hostage for their reliability. It was a post of honour, since promotion thereto was won, as by Peukestas, for valiant deeds, especially in defence of the King. In 325 and 324 the Guards were eight in number. These were Alexander's 'Marshals.' We hear most, perhaps, of Hephaestion, Ptolemaeus, son of Lagos, and Leonnatus. Some of the best-known names – Parmenio, Craterus, for example – are not in the list; these generals were engaged on special and perhaps distant duties. Peukestas, on the other hand, though raised to the dignity of a Guard, was given a satrapy or governorship.

Next came a wider circle, the Companions; a word which seems to connote first, the Macedonian cavalry raised on a feudal and territorial basis; secondly, infantry, of the same sort, known as Foot-Companions, and regiments apparently enrolled from the towns, known as Civilian-Companions (this word rests upon the evidence of one manuscript of Arrian only); thirdly, the King's Companions, a body of some eighty men; and fourthly, an inner circle of these same King's Companions, whom we might almost call the King's Own Comrades. Notable Companions, in the third signification, are Parmenion, Philotas, Cleitus, Philip the doctor, and the Lyncestrian Alexander; to whom we may add Medius, whose banquet perhaps hastened Alexander's end. Berve

finds it possible to be rather precise about these Companions; but there is a danger of reading modern institutions into old names, and we ought to be cautious, perhaps, of using even the term Marshals, convenient as it is, in view of its obvious associations. The inner circle of Companions composed a council, called upon on special occasions, military and diplomatic; and yet this was not the same as the actual Army Council.

Here arises that most interesting question, the more interesting, in that it is one of the many questions about Alexander that we cannot really hope to answer: How far was his most virile personality not only the driving-force of these wonderful years' achievements, but also the guiding-force? How far was his work the work of his Syndicates, whether they be the military, the scientific, the literary, the prophetic, the priestly syndicates, or a sort of blend of them all? The more that historians study the Great Men of History, the more they seem to find their achievements equally, or largely, the work of many of their fellow-labourers; there are great exceptions, and Alexander may be one of these. The view has already been expressed in this work that Alexander, like most great men, was both himself a dominant energy and a focus for less dominant but still powerful energies: and the more we turn from Alexander himself and look at the less brilliant but soberer

and perhaps solider spirits of his followers, the more we must incline to some such view.

Besides these military groups, there were attached to the Headquarters other bodies of men; the 'Secretariat,' for the transmission of letters and orders; the Keepers of the Diary – apparently a personal Diary; perhaps also Keepers of the King's projects or plans; the Surveyors, who noted distances and directions, and so kept a sort of Geographical Diary; scientific research workers, also making their notes; and last and not least, the official historians, who based their work, quite obviously, upon the Diaries and the records of the Surveyors, but possibly were also conscious propagandists.

The fragments of quite a galaxy of early biographers or historians of Alexander which have survived, embedded in the work of other historians, geographers, or even grammarians, are disappointing. We are, indeed, able to form some idea of the value of the lost whole from surviving parts, *ex pede Herculem*; but there is little of really arresting interest just where we might look to find most. The passages to which we turn most eagerly are those of Eumenes, the official diarist; these are preserved for us in Aelian, Arrian, and Plutarch; but if these are genuine, they deal, oddly enough, chiefly with the number and length of Alexander's 'wines' or drinking parties. Aelian cer-

tainly concludes that Alexander was not the temperate table companion which many modern writers paint him. But the second and third fragments, contained in Arrian and Plutarch, are valuable indeed, as giving us a detailed account of Alexander's last illness, whence specialists have concluded that there was no poison at work, but an ordinary, if malignant, fever. Apparently each movement of the King, in his private life, was duly chronicled: *peribant horae et imputabantur.*

These diaries were, it seems, 'worked up' by one Ephippus, and he gives us a certain amount of gossip about the splendour and costliness of Alexander's banquets; the perfumed floors, the gorgeous hangings or coverlets, the precious vessels; as well as about the reverential awe with which the guests regarded their host, who 'flared up quickly, and was not to be withstood in anger.' The greatest drinker among the Macedonians, says this author, was Proteas, and it was the cup in which he called upon Alexander to pledge him which, being beyond even Alexander's capacity, threw him into his last and fatal fever.

Besides this chronicling department, there were the philosophers and the religious officials. Apart from Callisthenes, there were Onesicritus and Anaximenes (who are called Cynics, but were certainly not orthodox Cynics) and Anaxarchus, who seems to have

been in some sense a 'director' of Alexander, at any rate in certain great crises.

Of priests there was clearly a considerable number, since Alexander sacrificed freely to a variety of deities, of whom a certain group seems to have been the traditional objects of Macedonian worship. More interesting than these sacrificers and masters of ceremonies were the prophets, who must have played a considerable part in the direction of Alexander's actions. Aristander is prominent at certain important occasions; he is consulted as to the foundation of Alexandria in Egypt; where one cannot help, somehow, being reminded of the crowd of seers, oracle-sellers, geometricians, and others whom Aristophanes gathers round at the founding of Cloud-Cuckoo-town. It appears that the more Alexander prospered the less he consulted the prophets; or he may have taken his own divinity so seriously that he became superior to such guidance.

Outside these official adherents, there was a number also of prominent men who perhaps attached themselves to the army, rather than were attached to it. Among these were poets, sculptors, perhaps painters: painters at any rate collected evidence, and composed great battle-pieces, on a scale worthy of Orcagna; and among these was one Helena, whose work may have influenced the well-known mosaics of the Battle of Issus at Pompeii. Helena's picture, at

least, was of Issus; the mosaics may perhaps be of Gaugamela.

Here must end this sketch of Alexander's entourage. It has been compared to that of Napoleon in Egypt; and Napoleon studied his Plutarch's 'Alexander' carefully. It is not likely that a more complete array of assistants ever followed any conqueror or army till the days of the Great War; and if in the Great War there were medical corps, cinemas, and instructors in football and boxing, we should remember that Alexander also had military hospitals and convalescent camps, organized great 'shows' and merrymakings, and constantly held athletic meetings.

It is difficult to find a good parallel for the relation of Alexander as commander-in-chief to his army. Hannibal and Napoleon are obvious, but hardly genuine, parallels. Nor is it easy to find a reasonable parallel to Alexander, merely as a great conqueror. He is indeed unique in having lost no battle, at least where he was present, and in having surmounted unsurmountable difficulties in sieges, often the great crux of the generals of old. Alexander himself had a 'sense' of a military position as unerring as that of blind Zizka of Bohemia; he had the rapidity of Hannibal; and he had a gift of improvisation and invention which even our Navy and Merchant Service of the Great War might justly have envied. He revelled

in the inaccessible. He carried boats about, in sections, through unpromising districts, and, to cut a long matter short, when one reads Arrian's story of his personal achievements, one is constrained to cry 'Credo quia incredibile.'

There have been several most remarkable conquerors, but it is, I think, to conquered Persia that we must go to find one justly to be compared with him – and yet he began his career with a crushing defeat from the Turks. Nâdir Shah, Nâdir Kooli as he was, was born to no purple, and began life as a tailor and dealer in skeepskin goods; his son – 'grand son, and great-grandson, and so on for seventy generations, of the sword' – married a great princess. Nâdir began his military life as a brigand; but he and his troupe expelled the Afghans from Persia, and when he went to receive pardon, and perhaps a decoration, he slew both the governor of the city and his own uncle, and then plunged again in the harrying of Afghans. But this was only to 'keep his hand in'; and not long afterwards he dethroned the Shah, and sent a proud defiance to Turkey, with whom the Shah had made an inglorious peace. As Regent, he met, and was thoroughly beaten by, the Turks, himself nevertheless almost outdoing Alexander in deeds of prowess. Here Nâdir is really greater than Alexander, for, if we can hardly imagine Alexander in defeat at all, we somehow do not visualize him loading, as

Nâdir did, his broken troops, not with reproaches, but with rewards and honours; certainly not, if Plutarch and Curtius are right (Grote thinks not) in saying that at the banquet fatal to Cleitus Alexander approved of cruel gibes upon the Macedonians defeated in Sogdiana. In the successful battle which followed, Nâdir respected the body of his fallen opponent, as Alexander did of Dareius, and gave it back to the Turks for honourable sepulture. Nâdir became Shah by the Oriental method of refusing the elevation daily for a whole month; and then his really triumphant series of conquests began. Numbers made no difference to him; he mastered Kabul, still pursuing his old enemies the Afghans, and seized on a pretext, perhaps more than a pretext, to invade India. He was swift as Alexander himself, and as successful. Like Alexander, he won incalculable loot; like Alexander, he gave his troops the magnificent leavings. Fired, as was Alexander, by desire to annex India to his dominions, he saw, however, as Alexander did not see, and perhaps did not need to see, that such a project was beyond even his powers. He invaded Delhi, none the less, and exercised a remarkable restraint over his victorious troops, till murders by the inhabitants forced him to give rein to his exasperated soldiery, and a massacre resulted such as Alexander's own troops hardly could have carried out. There is a story that the Emperor himself came and begged Nâdir to

stop the massacre, as he sat in a mosque near the centre of the city; with a word, Nâdir called off 'his bloody war-dogs,' as Alexander is said to have checked the Persepolis massacre. Another tells how Nâdir, rumoured to be killed, and hearing how Delhi was rising, at once sounded the call for prayers. Nâdir, as Alexander is described by some historians, was, for his time, a despiser of the tenderer emotions, and limited his commanders to a single wife. As Alexander censored letters, Nâdir searched baggage; such a hold had he over his troops. He had to face burning deserts, as Alexander did; Nâdir deprived his own son of his eyesight, and bitterly repented in dust and ashes, as Alexander repented his murder of Cleitus; he enrolled Tartars in his Persian army, as Alexander enrolled Persians among his Macedonians; and Nâdir lived long enough to become, as Alexander might indeed have become, a cruel tyrant. He died by assassination, as Alexander may just possibly have died by poison.

This brief sketch, omitting very many remarkable features of Nâdir, will show perhaps that one man at least had a large number of those qualities which we associate with Alexander. Those who do not know their Persian history will perhaps be astonished to learn that this new Alexander died in 1747.

Nâdir had to climb to a throne; Alexander was an insecure successor of a father whom some even

thought him to have helped to murder. His early days of royalty must have been very anxious. His attitude towards Greece, conciliation to Athens, 'frightfulness' to Thebes, left a very doubtful element behind him when he turned East; partly, perhaps, because an unknown was less dangerous to him than a known Greece. Not that he had any personal cowardice; but he meant to reign, and he meant to achieve great things. He had, therefore, to be a diplomatic militarist, and a very military diplomat. His own people and his army, tried and tested, indeed, by Philip, had to be cudgelled or coaxed into loyalty to an absentee landlord. Somehow levies must be kept flowing eastward. He started almost penniless. No wonder Alexander was made up of every kind of opposite; no wonder he was in turns kind, chivalrous, conciliatory, cruel, violent, furious. Usually when we see this contradiction in anyone in high place we say he is a weak tyrant, but Alexander was not weak. Yet there is something else which will make a man an amazing bundle of opposites, and that is nerves. I imagine the athletic, godlike, utterly brave Alexander, full of *élan vital*, drive, and push, to have had intervals of racking anxiety, and to have been the victim of intermittent nervous strain. Up to Issus all went well. After Issus it was clear that the great Eastern 'push' was going through. But would the Grand Army stand it? Would he find the loot to pay

its wages? Orientals are cunning in *caches* and hiding-places. Would Philip's old guard, having got him well out of his kingdom, avenge on him, justly or unjustly, Philip's murder? Body-guards, personal guards, private soldiers won over by chivalrous acts and spectacular courage, might prove unavailing. In the midst of a mellay, indeed, Alexander perhaps felt safest. But there lay ahead always the possibility of defeat, and the terrors of periods of inaction after victory. The stimulus of revenge for Xerxes and his invasion, and of loot to come, might prove inefficient. New ideas must constantly be hatched. Divine birth, conscious imitation of Achilles, of Heracles, of Dionysus, fulfillings of oracles, wild ceremonies and wilder orgies, shifting about of units, scientific explorations, the lure of the unknown, burnings of palaces, a sudden taste for Persian splendours, wholesale marriages, donatives, leaves, colonizings – all this amazing medley must be brought into play if he was to carry his mixed troops, and worst of all, that dreaded bevy of grey old generals, with him. Alexander's achievement in taking them as far as the Sutlej (or Beas) before they cried 'enough' is miracle enough for a dozen Emperors.

CHAPTER IV

ALEXANDER'S FIRST STEPS

ALEXANDER'S immediate steps, upon the murder of Philip, were chiefly directed, as was natural, to the securing of his position in Greece, and he was obliged to leave Philip's eastern expeditionary force to itself. The value of Philip's work in making the first move eastwards has been insufficiently appreciated by historians, save Niebuhr. It is true that Philip could not spare as yet many troops, and did not dare himself to leave Macedonia. But his force, which has been exaggerated, was yet possibly larger than that which Alexander took over two years later, if only because Philip at the time had money, and Alexander, by reason of this very expedition of Philip's, began his own expedition rather short of money, and was obliged to recruit his small force by levies, attracted, no doubt, by the glamour of his victories, the quantity of the loot, and the adventurous tales brought back by the drafts which, even from so small a force, Alexander kept sending back home at intervals during the great march. It is quite clear that the Macedonian had much love for his rude Fatherland, and homesickness was all along one of Alexander's worst enemies. That he triumphed over it as far as to the Beas is one of his most wonderful achievements among many, and is due largely

to his inspiring personality and to his own vigorous initiative and captivating bravery. He was always a radiant of dynamic energy, and that energy drove steadily Eastward. But it is because his work was so much his own, because he risked himself, in the beginning, with so absurdly small a force (it is put at 40,000), that Niebuhr is right in calling him a great gambler. He was, moreover, torn asunder in various directions. At home was the dangerous Philip 'party'; there was trouble on his own borders; Greece was not crushed, as soon appeared; and if he devoted himself to finishing off Greece, he was allowing Persia to store up strength for a friendly 'invasion' of Greece, as against Macedon, that was likely to be far more deadly than the hostile invasion of Xerxes. Persia, it must also be remembered, held now the supremacy at sea.

Nothing is more remarkable here than Alexander's coolness and yet swiftness. Regarding Attalus as the chief potential leader of the Philip party, he sent for him and had him put out of the way. Parmenio he could count upon, and he was left with Philip's withdrawn forces ready to safeguard Alexander's crossing of the Hellespont. Olympias saw to Cleopatra (whom Arrian names Eurydice) and her son Caranus. We cannot say whether Alexander's wrath (reported by Justin) at Olympias' swift action was real or feigned. Certainly

Olympias felt perfectly confident, or she would not have dared to dedicate Pausanias' dagger, and honour Pausanias himself with a sepulchre and some sort of 'ninth-day festival.' Alexander for his part punished the conspirators, and at Siwah, later, he demanded of the Oracle whether he had done so completely or not. His motives and feelings in so dealing with the conspirators we cannot altogether plumb; but Alexander's treatment later on of Bessus suggests that while secretly rejoicing in his father's murder he desired to establish that any assassination of a monarch was *pessimi exempli*. His own apprehension (we must not say fear) of assassination was probably ever-present, and while his chivalrous trust of Philippus the doctor in Asia – which reminds us of the story of Richard the Lion-hearted drinking the Soldan's draught, in the *Talisman* – deserves high credit, we must recollect the treatment of Hephaestion's doctor nine years afterwards, for mere failure to cure; and we may suppose that had there been death in the cup, Alexander's last breath would have devised brave torments for Philip.

The trouble on his borders he met vigorously, and used the occasion, no doubt, to train and flesh his troops. In early 335 he entered Thrace, and while crossing Mount Haemus met a mixed body which gave him an opportunity for that sudden adaptation to unusual methods which he so understood. The

enemy included armed 'merchants,' says the vulgate text of Arrian. There are suggestions of many other readings, but there is something to be said for 'merchants' who may have been owners of the 'wagons' mentioned in the context. If Arrian correctly describes the manœuvre, troops who would lie down and let wagons roll over their locked shields were wonderfully disciplined. The Triballi and Getae followed, and last, the Illyrians (the geography of these campaigns is difficult; to track Alexander's every step may be interesting enough, but belongs to the geographer rather than the historian. The island Peuke was near the Danube's mouth; but this cannot have been the island mentioned in this context; there are various islands above Silistria, and Peuke would be a common type of name).

The incident of the Celts or Gauls, who came rather humbly to Alexander, but spoke proudly, must have come as something of a shock to Alexander, who seems already to have anticipated in mind his high position as world-conqueror. They are reported to have answered Alexander's question, 'Of what were they most afraid?' 'Lest the sky fall on us.' This story arises, no doubt, from some Celtic asseveration, which the hearers did not quite understand. These small wars prepared Alexander for swift and drastic action on the revolt of Thebes; and seeming swifter even than it was, because of a

rumour of his death, which was indeed the occasion of the revolt. Philip had done his work well, and no one really assisted the Thebans, who did indeed provide an opportunity to Greece to reassert liberty, even if at the cost of 'peaceful penetration' by Persia. If the 'Celtic' incident shows Alexander's opinion of himself, the Theban revolt showed Greece's opinion of Alexander, and the magical effect of his presence. Even if we must allow something in both incidents to later writing-up, and to the unconscious reflex in the writers' minds from greatness achieved, it is clear that all eyes were on Alexander, and that his own energy and strategy had already won him great repute.

Thebes was alone responsible for the destruction of Thebes. Alexander's worst detractors could not say that he did not attempt conciliation with Greece in all reasonable ways. It does not take a young King long to learn that bloodshed of itself serves no purpose, and Alexander was reserving himself and his men for his great expedition. A pacified Greece was better than an irritated Greece; let Persian support for Greece, and Greek support (by her mercenaries) for Persia be negatived, and all the West must prove tractable. Thebes, by revolting, on a false rumour of Alexander's death, seemed to cast, and for a time did cast, Alexander's pacificatory plans, and indeed his whole eastern projects, to the winds. We can readily understand Alexander's haste, his sudden and

dramatic appearance at the walls, and his orders (if, indeed, they were not already given) for assault. Nor, if we consider the provocation to Alexander, and the obstinacy of the Thebans, and the standards of the time, can we cry out against the severity of the vengeance taken. Greece must be left behind either conciliated or cowed, and the Thebans had made possible only the second.

Alexander was guilty later of many severities, and of one shameful massacre – of the Indians at Massaga, thought to be preparing to desert, before they had well joined Alexander's forces – and for these he must stand at the bar of history; but the hard treatment of Thebes, which stirred all Greece through every fibre, was the only assurance possible for the carrying forward of the great expedition.

The severity of Alexander at Thebes in any case reflects the future sacker, and part-burner, of Persepolis. No doubt Greece must at all costs be crushed, until the teeth and claws of Persia itself, the greater danger, could be drawn. In the story of the massacre different accounts at once meet us. Arrian (after Ptolemaeus) says that Perdiccas both attacked Thebes without Alexander's orders and captured it easily. Diodorus says that the Thebans made a great stand, and that Macedonians as well as Boeotians revelled in the orgy of slaughter which followed the capture. On this divergence two things may be

remarked. First, Alexander was there, and though anxious at first to spare Thebes, and desirous of saving Greek soldiers, who might be more useful live than dead, if they could be drawn into the Vengeance-Crusade, must surely have been appealed to before attack, and must surely have given consent, if not instructions. Secondly, history is not without examples (the murder of St. Thomas of Canterbury is in point) of commanders-in-chief, especially if Kings, giving a vague order, and trusting to the zeal of subordinates to carry it out to the full; but ready to hide behind the vagueness of commands if anything untoward should happen. Certainly Alexander had not yet that power of calling off licentious soldiery in the moment of conquest which Nâdir Shah so wonderfully used at Delhi. The razing of a great city, the selling of brave Greeks into slavery, was almost viler than massacre; and Alexander certainly acquiesced in the enslavement. In discussing the murder of Cleitus, Droysen[1] rather oddly remarks, 'Alexander repented; he sacrificed; the moralists who condemn him do not tell us what more he could have done!' Repentance Alexander had always at command; and whatever may be said upon the 'radical insincerity of character' (the phrase is Hogarth's) of Alexander's father, there was little or no radical insincerity in Alexander, who was a very

[1] Vol. I, iii. 2.

remarkable example of the sharpness of the heathen conscience, though his attempts at repentance were like Esau's; all said and done, 'he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.' Alexander repented of his treatment of Thebes (rather forgotten by historians in the salving of Pindar's house); 'frightfulness' was necessary, but such 'frightfulness' frightened Alexander himself; he sacrificed at Ilium to avert the anger of Priam – of all people – and felt that Dionysus' wrath must be constantly averted; and though Alexander did not himself rebuild Thebes, Kassander rebuilt it not long after Alexander's death. But perhaps the best thing to say in favour of Alexander's treatment of Thebes is that it was effective, though it did not cow Athens, on whose supposed decadence much ink has been misspent. Parmenio meanwhile, though withdrawn, was holding his own against Memnon in the East.

In 335 Alexander said good-bye to Greece, and though he kept close touch in his earlier Asiatic marches, he had the East in his eyes from now to his death. Later, he seems to have lost grip over Macedonia, partly owing to his mother's indiscretions; and we must rather wonder if he ever shared that homesickness from which his troops suffered so much. It is interesting that while Alexander *s'en va-t-en-guerre* the historians begin

almost to forget Greece. At this moment, indeed, as in Roman history from the Gracchi onward, history rightly becomes biography.

Of Alexander's army I have spoken above. It is interesting that at the beginning of his eastward march he made the same error which Xerxes made, of keeping his army in dependence on his fleet, as he did again, with a special purpose in view, later on. Soon, however, he realized that not only must the army march far from the sea coast, but that a fleet in being would be a challenge to the superior Persian fleet, a victory of which must not be risked. He therefore 'burned his boats.' Hogarth sees in this decision a necessary corollary of the failure of Alexander to enrol Athens. It was, indeed, most unlikely that Athens would allow herself so to be enrolled. But as long as she was able to head a naval coalition in Greece, she was also free to join the Persian (and Greek) fleet, and render Alexander's communications very doubtful. An army can be kept more or less under watch, and can in case of need be cornered; a fleet is as free as the winds, and the hostages which Macedon held in twenty Athenian ships were not enough to buy her allegiance. But though Alexander in scrapping his fleet for the nonce did the only wise thing, his doing so makes his achievements all the more wonderful. He had to neutralize Persian naval power by going

wearily round the coasts and attacking the harbours from landward.

I do not know how Alexander's success accords with the principles associated with Captain Mahan, but to the outside observer Alexander is the greater miracle for 'burning his boats.' Later, he took a different line, and was more pleased, it seems, at saving his fleet than his army. For the moment – and it is a proud thought – humbled Athens dominated the situation.

A proud thought, indeed; and we may pause here a moment to see if we can learn by what virtue or quality it was that Athens, often outwardly crushed and humbled, yet remained, right up to the time of Hadrian, if not longer, the great city of the Mediterranean. If we can answer this question, we shall see what it was that Alexander's successors took into Asia as ample compensation for his victories, and even massacres.

To most of us the history of Greece is the history of Athens, and even now when other States are receiving more attention, as indeed they deserve, their histories only serve to throw that of Athens into greater relief.

Many serious students, and nearly all who know Greece only by hearsay, would at once suggest that it was political liberty which made Athens great. But that must be an error, since it is just when Athens may be said to have lost her political liberty

that we have most cause to wonder at her resilience. Was it perhaps Athens' spirit of enterprise, her wide-awakeness, that kept her young and vigorous, even in affliction? It is true that Athens was forced to be enterprising, if only because her state-territory could not support itself in corn and other necessities; she was obliged to import, and she must therefore make her money by trade and manufacture. But when her trade was most crippled, we find her still a power in Greece, indeed in eastern Europe. Neither her enterprise, nor her trade, nor her wealth (for she had exhausted her silver-mines), nor her ships, could of themselves suffice to keep Athens not only afloat, but vigorous, when other Greek states went under.

No; what made Athens a power was her freedom of thought; her unfettered spirit, her wide-ranging mind, which truly did what Socrates, in his swinging basket, in Aristophanes' comedy, is supposed to boast that he does: 'trod the air, and always looked on high.' Yet quick and brilliant as was the Attic mind, it was never merely flippant or irreverent. Attic philosophy passed always through the practical affairs of life to the study of things higher than man's natural life; and St. Paul had reason to compliment the Athenians not on their scepticism but on their devotion. That was the strange but inextinguishable spirit of Athens; brilliance of invention curbed by intense reflection; political idealism curbed by a stern

sense of the practical; and utter freedom of thought, curbed by a seemly and decent sense of reverence.

For all this, Athens was unique in the Greek world. The slower-witted Sparta, Boeotia, Macedon, might conquer her, but they still feared, and had good cause to fear, her. And while Alexander was campaigning in Asia, there was the stalwart (whether or not misguided) Demosthenes left behind in Athens; another 'Philippic' or two, and all Alexander's great schemes might be laid low. No wonder, then, Alexander was tender and tactful towards Athens. She was still mistress.

Why did the Persians let Alexander pass the Hellespont? Memnon, the Hellespont crossed, had a wise and definite plan of campaign; and it seems likely that there was method in what seemed the Persian madness, if it was not part of Memnon's own plan. The farther east Alexander could be enticed, till he came to any really vulnerable part of Persia, the greater his discomfiture would be, and the easier it would be to block his return, even if he were not seriously defeated. But Alexander was not to be treated as an ordinary general. His Hannibalian strategy was able – for a time – to laugh at communications. He fed on the country, and so far there was plenty. Perhaps it was this discovery that Alexander was *sui generis* that caused the disastrous compromise of an offered battle on the Granicus. Alex-

ander wanted battles; prestige was food to him and his troops; and the Persians, no doubt divided in counsel, played into his hand at the Granicus, as at Issus.

The comparative feebleness, however, of the Persian stand on the Granicus (334) does not at all detract from the vigour and resourcefulness of Alexander in the battle. Grote rightly notes that Arrian's account of the battle is incomplete because he (and presumably this means Ptolemaeus) centres upon Alexander's own achievements. But it is a light error. It was indeed Alexander's battle and victory. To force a crossing at such speed that the troops actually seem to have rushed within the Persian javelin-barrage, and then to join in close combat, on the other side, with the short pike, so that the javelins were now useless, was a masterpiece of tactics. Alexander's own rush carried him into grave personal danger, and he was only saved by the rapid stroke of Cleitus. The Greek infantry on the Persian side was either slaughtered or captured. Alexander had wonderfully nursed his troops, and had only slight losses.

The survivors of the Persians' Greek infantry were sent to Macedonia as slaves, and their arrival must have had a great influence upon wavering Macedonians. But the results of the battle were overwhelming in the field. For the time being, Alexander's army was the only organized force in the Near East. Sardis submitted, Ephesus was cap-

tured; Miletus resisted stoutly, and Alexander now brought his fleet into play, to head off the Persian fleet without accepting action. Miletus was stormed, and all but Milesian citizens were sold as slaves – for Alexander was now beginning to collect something like a war-chest for his wider operations. It was no wonder that Caria joined him.

Perhaps the most interesting example of Alexander's dealings with the cities of Asia Minor will be Ephesus, chief of Ionian cities. Here was settled Amyntas, who had fled from Macedonia and had retired there. He was well received by the Ephesian oligarchy (for these terms, oligarchy and democracy, we must willy-nilly employ, though they seem to connote a more clear-cut division of parties than history warrants us, as a rule, in assuming).

After the Granicus, Ephesus became a rather natural rallying point for the defeated forces, but yet 'democracy' uplifted its head, hoping that the Persian defeat would bring the end of oligarchic rule. When, therefore, Memnon appeared with his defeated troops, he was eagerly welcomed, and almost invited to reduce the people to their proper station. Wild havoc ensued; but on Alexander's dreaded approach, Memnon went to secure succour, and Amyntas fled to the Persian fleet. On this the people rose in fury; the oligarchs were stoned, even being

torn from the altars; and while the riot was yet in full course, Alexander entered. At once he stopped the massacre; he established, by a firm hand, the democracy in peaceable possession, and assigned the taxes paid to Persia to the temple of Ephesian Artemis. Arrian well says that Alexander's conduct here reflects on him the highest credit.

So, indeed, it does. Alexander was here the chivalrous victor, jubilant with unexpected success. He could afford to be generous; and we may reasonably conclude that this generosity, which remained throughout a marked trait of his character, was really a part of him. It was indeed this youthful freshness, verve, courage, and open-handedness which endeared even the isolated 'Grand Monarch' of a few years later, a monarch grown suspicious, often harsh, sometimes uncontrollable, to his men, which made them follow into unknown India, and which laid the foundations of that hero-worship which outlived the soberer and more reflective estimates of the philosophers.

Halicarnassus, with an Athenian in charge of the garrison, put up a very fine defence, till the Athenian, Ephialtes, was slain in a sortie. Memnon drew off his garrison, and Alexander entered a smoking city. A rapid march along the coast, with submission all along the route, brought Alexander into winter quarters at Gordium.

CHAPTER V

GORDIUM TO GAUGAMELA

THE death, before Mitylene, of Memnon, a great admiral who had learnt to understand and to make good material of the Eastern sailor, was almost the death of Greek hopes; at any rate it was the cutting of a knot for Alexander less extricable than that of the Gordian wagon. Alexander's 'luck' – as that of other great leaders – had early become a proverb. His learning of the revolt of Thebes when he did, and his most timely arrival, were a striking manifestation of his 'luck'; the timely sword-cut of Cleitus on the Granicus bank was another. It was not all luck; '*au bon joueur le bal lui vient.*' The weakening of what had become almost a 'one-man' fleet left Alexander free to develop his own. His taking of Memnon's widow as wife, or unwedded wife, from among a bevy of captives, may have been, as Grote hints, a 'Homeric' touch – like Neoptolemus wedding Andromache – or may have been a way of setting tongues wagging through the Persian households, who would realize both the humiliation and the honour in their due light. Elsewhere I suggest that here was also policy; for Barsine combined East and West as no ordinary Persian woman could have combined them; and was, moreover, of royal blood.

Possibly Memnon's death also (as Grote suggests) left Dareius free to take the offensive; and it must be to the credit of the Persians that – wisely or not – they did desire to be up and at their invaders. So hot were they for action, that Dareius felt justified in destroying Charidemus, who advised delay and caution. At this point one is led to surmise that Alexander, who was skilled in all the arts, and had a crowd of 'Graeculi esurientes' whom he might bribe or intimidate, was somehow able to infiltrate his own views into the counsels of the Persian High Command; on no other grounds can I find Dareius' strategy before Issus explicable. That Alexander had an admirable intelligence service is evident. I hazard the suggestion that Alexander's secret service somehow persuaded Dareius' staff that Alexander, from disaffection or fear of his troops, was turning back towards Issus to make for home; and that by coming into the narrows Dareius could not only check, but crush him. In this way, Dareius' dispositions, especially his use of the side hills, which caused Alexander to bend back his line to a danger angle, were good generalship. Historians seem to concur in regarding Dareius' move and arrangements as so much blind folly.

Alexander was now less an adventurer and more of a triumphant invader. Reinforced from home, he set about securing his communications. Divided

policies, since Memnon's influence must still have been felt, kept the Persians from defending the difficult pass of Mount Taurus. Alexander's 'luck' helped him again; and shortly afterwards also, when he had a violent bout of Cilician fever.

Arrian is a soldierly writer, though not so sound a critic as modern historians often think him, and if honest in intention, is partial in his selection. Before Issus, however, he becomes instinct with dramatic feeling (as also in the story of the revolt of Thebes), and sees Dareius drawn on to a course of madness by a spirit of madness from on high. Like all the catastrophic characters of Greek tragedy, Dareius digs his own grave. The idea has its attractions. But Arrian should have seen that the Persians, accustomed to hills, were not badly placed, with their left resting upon them; and that when they chose the plain, at Gaugamela, they fared no better. Many critics, in fact, blow hot and cold with the same mouth and condemn Dareius for forsaking the plain near Issus and embracing it at Gaugamela. Very possibly the only 'Até' which lured Dareius to destruction was inspired by Alexander himself, who thus staged the tragedy and wrought the catastrophe. If so, his advance beyond Issus was itself a mere lure, though he could not foretell if, and when, the trap would spring. But his 'luck' made all work well for him,

even if his return march was more sudden than he had expected. Certainly his surprise at hearing that Dareius had already captured Issus is attested by good evidence. But either he felt he could afford to ignore Dareius, unless pursuing, or he moved on deliberately to draw Dareius down to a bottle-neck, and so force a really decisive action. Issus was not, however, decisive; and Alexander must have had the discomfort all along of knowing that another battle, and a big one, must come. Issus was, however, deeply interesting in that the Persians by skilful use of the hills almost outflanked the Macedonians. What would happen to phalanx formation when attacked in the rear is rather difficult to see. Though technically (as we see in the various *Tactica*) it was intended to face about, this must have been a slow and cumbrous process. Moreover, the phalanx, when it advanced at Issus, did not pierce or break the Persian line; and Alexander grew apparently dissatisfied with it as a weapon of attack, and began to recast it in his latter days. Here, after coping with the very awkward situation on his right, he worked himself round on the right to the Persians' rear and tried to drive them forward on to the pikes of the phalanx – a strange piece of tactics, but which might often be effective, and was used not here alone.

The most important capture in this battle was not that of Dareius' queen and princesses (one won-

ders what they were doing there, rather than at Damascus), but letters revealing much Greek 'treason.' It was clear Alexander could trust himself in Macedonia, but not in Greece. But even where he was, all was not well. Alexander now 'bestrode the narrow world like a Colossus,' and that meant that petty men were becoming jealous. Philotas now begins to think treason.

Alexander must have all credit for his chivalrous treatment of Dareius' mother, wife, and daughters (one of whom he married later). The important point is that his contemporaries liked to think of him as chivalrous; and that they did so was of good augury for Hellenism. We cannot, however, envy the unfortunate women their journeyings as far as Susa, and their captivity there, from which Dareius' queen was spared by death some two years later.

The negotiations between Dareius and Alexander after Issus have been discussed by George Radet,[1] and it seems clear that Dareius made three separate attempts to come to terms, offering something like sovereignty with the hand and dowry of his daughter Stateira, who was not, therefore, among the captives of Issus.

Here again Alexander breaks with Philip, whose rule was to use diplomacy to the utmost before using force, and who would have made good use of such

[1] *Revue des Études Anciennes* for 1925.

an opportunity. Here is the meaning of Parmenio's advice, which, here as elsewhere, was to do as Philip would have done. Alexander rejected the offers with haughtiness. Philip's way was not to be his.

Egypt formed an interlude between Issus and Gaugamela, and the Egyptian sojourn is remarkable both for the intensity of the siege of Tyre, which alone made it possible, and for the visit to the Temple of Ammon at Siwah.

Alexander's treatment of Tyre must stand out as one of the sadder revelations of a character that must be satisfied with all or nothing. The Tyrians, on his approach, offered civilities, and even some sort of submission. Their fault was over-confidence in a position whose strength had been well tested; and after their determined countering of all that Alexander's engineers and engines could achieve, until Greek skill beat down Tyrian endurance, we might have expected some generosity in the treatment of the city. But resistance fired Alexander not to admiration, but to revenge. Despite their tearing down of Alexander's mole, despite their burning, by a bold use of a novel kind of fireship, Alexander's towers, the Tyrians' defence only caused Alexander to recreate the navy which he had once judged unneeded, and to this new blockading and attacking force Tyre succumbed. The rocks that were

dropped into the sea – forming a sort of primitive mine-field – Alexander's sweeping up of the rocks, by means not unsimilar to the sweeping of mines; the cutting, by the Tyrians, of the hawsers which moored the sweepers; the improvisation by Alexander's naval men of chain cables (a novelty, beyond even Tyrian skill); the Tyrian surprise attack; the Macedonians' final capture of the wall – all this reads like some modern operations at the mouth of a harbour-base, with drifters and destroyers and mine-shotted iron nettings. But there were to be no prisoners of war; the brave defenders were furiously massacred; women and children were thrown into the slave-market, and their miseries could hardly have been alleviated had they learned that their sale had not seriously affected the economics of the slave-trade.[1]

Alexander seems to have gone to Siwah with the direct intention of 'getting the answer he wanted.' We can explain this very well in various ways. Hogarth tentatively suggests that Alexander did not set out for Siwah, but that, a large part of his force being sent back from Paraetonium, Alexander 'seized the occasion' to go to Siwah. This is not like Alexander, impulsive though he was. Everything,

[1] Tarn in *C. A. H.*, vol. vi, p. 376, from Glotz, *Ancient Greece at Work.*

indeed, would take Alexander to Siwah. He was already a confirmed globe-trotter, an American before his time. Mr. M. M. Kirkman, an American writer of a Life of Alexander and of some Alexander romances, stimulating perhaps to schoolboys, and cleverly illustrated, holds a strange theory that Alexander went to Siwah as a mere globe-trotter, but found that others attached a deeper significance to the visit. 'He has gone,' they said, 'to ascertain his parentage, and that must be divine.' Alexander then, finding so fitting a cap embroidered for him, wore it.

This seems a mere guess; but there may be something in it. One of the common errors of historians is to attach deep motives; and Lucian has well rebuked this tendency when he relates in the *True History* his meeting with Homer and his anxious inquiry, 'Why, oh why, did you begin your *Iliad* with the Wrath of Achilles?' 'I do not know,' replied Homer; 'I expect it just came into my head that way.'

Siwah is, however, about two hundred miles inland from Paraetonium; a journey thither needed careful planning and must have been quite deliberate. Its oracle had special links with Greece, and was cosmopolitan in character; Ammon, moreover, was the God of Springtime, and a visit to him at this stage of Alexander's career would be of good omen (see A. B. Cook's *Zeus*, vol. i). Maspéro says

that the Greeks knew the gods of the oases best. Alexander's choice may also seem more explicable if we remember that Philip had stood forth, in the 'sacred wars,' as champion of Apollo; Alexander, for his part, had insulted Apollo's priestess at Delphi, and though she had turned off the insult by a tactful and satisfying answer – 'My son, thou art irresistible!' – it seems that oracular Apollo would not forget the incident. Have we, then, here an explanation of Alexander's desertion of Apollo – the deity of Philip – for his own Zeus Ammon, as well as of the strange and cruel propitiatory sacrifice made to Apollo by the massacre of the Branchidæ, if that be indeed historical? Alexander's superstition, at least, is proved to the hilt: he believed himself to have incurred the wrath of Dionysus; he must have known that he had incurred that of Apollo. At Siwah he makes a break with the past, and with Philip. But the main question is not why did he go to that particular oracle, but why did he ask his question of any reputable oracle? What did it mean? Ehrenberg suggests that to Alexander the Western desert was really the danger, especially as oases are always difficult to deal with, and this oasis of Ammon might be peculiarly troublesome. Hence he needed a reconnaissance with a reasonable force, and the whole journey, with its camouflage-pretext, was a reconnaissance and no more. But still our point is,

why did he ask that question? I suggest that the question was really important and urgent; that other oracles (Karnak, for example) would not quite serve the turn; and that, for his own ends, the man who had once haled the Priestess of Delphi from her throne was now ready to be as humble as anyone might desire, provided he got the answer he wished. That answer was, that he was not Philip's son. Now we begin to see the point. Alexander, as Philip's own son, was in a delicate position; at any moment a rumour might be spread by his enemies that he, with his mother, had been privy to the assassination of his father. Whether unjust or not, such rumour would be fatal to his enterprise. Philip's old guard must have been only too ready to murmur, especially when our headstrong young 'Segismund' began to fling about. All this murmuring Alexander skilfully outflanks; the young scion of divinity must be followed for his birth as well as for his genius; it became, indeed, a pious exercise to do so. As for the 'young men' of this young Rehoboam, they had no *arrières pensées* about Philip; but they did like the idea of divinity, even semi-divinity. Everyone, therefore, would be pleased or appeased; and Alexander took good care later to keep up the idea by the Achilles pose and by his conscious imitations of Heracles and Dionysus. Even the difficult desert journey was well worth the toil, and results, at least

for the present, showed that Aristotle's psychology lessons had done useful work.

Grote dates from this reply Alexander's new vanity, and credits him with a 'simple faith.' There is no need to question Alexander's sincerity in believing the response, however obtained; just as there is no need to question his sincerity in believing much of the flattery of people like Aristarchus, who suggested that he might cause thunder; but it was policy, not mere vanity, as Plutarch says, which caused him to use his supposed divinity 'to maintain authority over others.' Henceforward he held trumps.

No glory is taken from Alexander's foundation of Alexandria by the obvious suggestion that the choice of site and the planning generally were very probably the work of his special experts, by whom he was accompanied. The important thing is that Alexander, a young and busy man, was thoroughly capable of presiding at a meeting of these experts and of being as good as any among them. His education had left few gaps; and he appears to be more expert, even young, than was the maturer Napoleon in the outlying affairs of sovereignty, though Napoleon probably had a keener eye for the right thing to do at the moment. With Alexander, at any rate, there was just that touch of genius which

makes (and herein genius consists) that which is said or done for one or more purposes meet and perform a variety of further purposes then undreamed of. The capture of Tyre, while giving to Alexander sea-supremacy, also made a new commercial centre (in the strict sense of the word) at Alexandria a possibility and a need. Alexander, if impulsive, was far-seeing, and so were his assistants, and the severity of the treatment of Tyre may well have been policy by anticipation. With the capture of Damascus by Parmenio Alexander's war-chest must have been immensely swelled, but Tyre would help to swell it further. No wonder Alexander could afford on his return from Egypt a most extravagant sacrifice to the Tyrian Heracles.

It was at the end of the siege that Dareius' first proposals for a settlement, repeated twice later, were received. One cannot help feeling that Parmenio's advice, as often, was wise, and did not deserve a turn of the old and familiar play of words, 'If I were you, I should accept,' 'And so I should, if I were you.' These smart phrases of Alexander were handed down, whether original or not, and became what we may call the regular captions of the great world-film.

On the way to Egypt the future Pharaoh had also taken Gaza, where we must leave doubtful the reputed cruelty, vile if Homeric, to the brave defender, Batis. Alexander is reported to have

dragged this perhaps unattractive, but certainly most stalwart, governor of the citadel round the walls, bound to his chariot. If the story is true, it shows how bad at times was the moral influence of Homer, taken thus literally; and how strange it was that Alexander, pupil of Aristotle, had not perceived that all in Homer was not gold that might glister, and the ape and tiger, even in his great ancestor Achilles, were best allowed to die.

On his way back he made offerings again to the Tyrian Heracles, and held (this is the most interesting point of all) a series of Greek plays, in Athenian fashion, thus emphasizing the definite arrival of Attic culture and paying a fine compliment to the city which in turns he ignored, rebuffed, and cajoled.

Alexander's was one of those comprehensive minds which could attend to several things at once. Tragic trilogies and feasts did not hinder him from planning and organizing what was to be his great campaign. All the apparatus of a Grand Army had to be gathered together: new drafts had to be brought into order, and operations themselves planned. He crossed the Euphrates and then marched up northward to ford the Tigris with difficulty, but not under fire. While the Macedonian organization was now such that, even had Alexander perished, a great battle would probably still have been fought, and an orderly retreat home-

ward achieved, his presence was an uplifting and inspiring power almost unknown else to history. The Persians, on the other hand, who needed cohesion and organization and stimulus, had no one to give the one or the other. Seldom has personality had more influence on the history of the world; a revolt against Dareius, who after all was but a usurper, might yet have saved Persia; but Persia still hung on the word of one who was already self-branded as a coward. Here one gets in extreme and disastrous form that 'divinity that hedges a king'; and the more disastrous, since the Persians were not the idle or meditative Orientals who might, and may be, found elsewhere in the East, but a proud and vigorous people. So we must leave it; here all positive, there all negative; here all diastole, there all systole.

Dareius' staff had learnt a great lesson from the defeat of Issus. There Dareius had been encamped upon a plain, and had left it for a narrow passage; now Dareius chose, even levelled in parts, and remained camped upon, the plain near Gaugamela, some distance south of Nineveh and some thirty miles west of Erbil or Arbela, whence the battle has its more customary name. Dareius or his staff knew that Alexander must seek them there. Neither host could any longer leave the other in being. And it may well be that plots against Dareius, should he

again play the poltroon, were already on foot, and that Dareius knew that he must fight for himself as well as for his empire. As for Alexander, a lunar eclipse after his fording of the Tigris had scared his troops almost into mutiny. The unknown was Alexander's own ambition; but his troops were of another mind, and railed, as the Children of Israel did against Moses, at one who led them they knew not whither. Alexander had indeed been hard put to it, and had been obliged to 'fake' a favourable explanation, that the Sun was Macedonian and the Moon Persian, which would have proved highly disconcerting had a solar eclipse occurred while the explanation was still in their minds. Alexander must have dreaded any sort of check in the great battle. Only success, and more and more success, would check the rising murmurs. Suspicion of Philotas' secret treachery was no doubt 'working like madness in the brain,' though the time for action was not yet. Parmenio had hardly forgotten the death of Attalus. No wonder Alexander would risk no night operations, especially after his statement about the sympathies of the Moon; and though his reply to Parmenio provided another 'caption' of the heroic type, Alexander knew quite well, as historians have perceived, that the old Marshal made a rare and unusual error. No wonder, also, that Alexander was anxious and nervous far above his wont; at any rate,

that he showed his nervousness as he rarely did, and that it was not till the watchman had called that the night would soon pass that he ventured to go to rest. He was indeed right when he said that the Sun was for his side; and if I have at all rightly pictured his state of mind before the battle, he must have quoted many times that night the words of Homeric Ajax: *ἐν δὲ φάει καὶ ὄλεσσον* – 'Destroy me – but in the daylight.'

In the daylight, he could afford to affect the 'Drake touch.' He would not hurry; all was in order; the Persians were tied to the stake, and must abide their baiting.

Plutarch, lover of the picturesque, and relying probably, here as elsewhere, more upon folk-lore fragments than on any set authority, does not lose his opportunity in the preliminaries of this great final battle of East and West.

There was a sort of rough game played among the troops, between two champions and their followings, Alexander *versus* Dareius; clods of earth flew first; then it came to fisticuffs; the game became a serious business, damage was done. Alexander hears of it, and turns the horseplay into a set sport; very properly, or most fortunately, 'Alexander' wins, and is rewarded with twelve villages! Here we have, no doubt, the soldiers' tale of what they would like to have happened; and here again we have what is so

dear to the popular mind, a shadow cast before of a coming event.

Then there is the eclipse of the moon, with its strange influence upon the spirits of the troops; and then comes the final staging of the battle, the Persian host on parade all the night through; cressets and torches, Dareius holding a review in the small hours; shoutings of orders, and barbaric yells pointing and throwing into relief the booming sound which arises from the presence of a great multitude – 'like the booming of the sea,' says Plutarch.

All these goings and comings, these alarums and excursions, on the Persian side were a terror to the Macedonian troops, a joy to Alexander, who saw his enemies tired out (reviews being more wearying than battles) before the day had dawned. Alexander may well retire to rest, confident; but in the morning there are speeches, sacrifices, omens, before the first great charge with which the battle (like all Alexander's battles) opens.

'Decisive battles' is a dangerous term; but this battle deserves it, and justifies it. If Alexander's troops and Alexander himself had been nervous for some days after the eclipse of September 20th (331), they were both at their best on the 1st of October. The battle is fully described by Arrian; the Macedonian right, as usual, had the shock troops; and the left, which at Issus had been in difficulties, had on

its outer edge the fine cavalry of Thessaly. Issus had almost resulted in outflanking of the Macedonian right. Alexander drew up his infantry in two clear lines, the rear line being so ordered as to be able to face about quickly. All that remained was for Alexander to choose the point, and the moment, for his cavalry charge which should open the engagement; and few commanders, save half-blind Hannibal and blind Zizka, have had such a marvellous sense of 'when' and 'where' as Alexander.

The Macedonian troops had been ordered to rest during the night before the battle. How far they did so is another matter; but the evidence seems to be that the Persians were actually under arms all night. Plutarch says that Dareius was inspecting the troops by torchlight; and he describes graphically the all-night roar of the great restless multitude.

One cannot but suspect that Parmenio's advice to attack by night was made in such a way and in such hearing that the Persians were deliberately kept on the alert while their opponents rested. If so, Parmenio's reputation for strategy is saved, and Alexander's heroic answer is an invention of later ages. To some deserter Alexander owed it that his cavalry did not charge over ground well prepared with calthrops or spikes.

The battle began with the customary manœuvring for outflanking on Macedonian right and Persian

left. Swift Bactrian horse were detached to make a swooping movement; Alexander countered with a cavalry charge which was not at once successful; but the Persian movement was checked, and Alexander had time to spy out that for which he was looking, the Persian weak point due to their excessive overlapping effort. He threw part of his now practised phalanx into a wedge and, with his best cavalry leading it, made straight for Dareius and his staff. The stroke at once took effect, and the battle was as good as won. But Alexander had also, by thus advancing his phalanx, left a serious gap, and the Persian right wing cavalry under Mazaeus actually broke through as far as the almost deserted camp. Here the Macedonian second line, taking on itself a great risk, came to the rescue, faced about and doubled in upon its own lines so as to drive the Persian cavalry the way it had come, and upon the lances of Alexander's own cavalry beyond. The Thessalian cavalry on Alexander's left now wheeled in turn; the mellay became massacre; and before long the Persians were in flight. It was a curious battle, beginning in the orthodox and orderly way which marked most ancient (and even mediæval) battles, and ending in a wild confusion. The victory was of Alexander's strategy as well as tactics; his strengthening of his left, and the bold step of a doubled infantry line, saved most promptly an almost

desperate position. Dareius' scythe-chariots, which might have seemed so powerful an arm, proved again that in serious warfare 'freak' engines of war rarely succeed; the horses were too easily scared off.

One great feature of the battle must have been the great war-cry of the Macedonians, raised on a given signal, when it was clear that the foe was to be delivered into their hands. A spectacular duel between Alexander and Dareius, the killing of Dareius' charioteer by Alexander's own spear, and the mistaken idea that Dareius himself was struck, are natural embroideries of those who still felt that things should be done in Homeric fashion. The dark cloud of dust raised by the flight, and the noise of the charioteers' whips, are further picturesque touches which we should be sorry to miss. The Persian right under Mazaeus held out longest; nay, so stoutly that Parmenio urgently recalled Alexander from his pursuit: but the Persians gave ground before reinforcements arrived. A new battle, however, began with the fleeing Persians and the oncoming Macedonians, and the general pursuit could not begin till the Persian right was destroyed or driven, not unwilling, off the field. Thus Dareius and many with him got clean away, travelling fast and light.

Immediately after this astonishing and decisive victory Babylon and Susa surrendered, with almost

incalculable treasures. Alexander took the grave risk of a month's rest for his troops in Babylon. 'No other place,' says Curtius, 'was so disastrous to discipline.' His remarks on the immodesty of women's dress, 'summa amicula exuunt . . . ad ultimum – honos auribus habitus sit – ima corporum velamenta proiciunt' fail, in these latter days, to stir us.

As a set-off to the dangers of these Babylonian dallyings, Alexander kept his troops occupied by votings for prizes of valour; he also did some re-organizing of his army and introduced some simple but useful devices, such as a visible signal, in place of the bugle-call, not always audible in the tumult of a camp. All this kept the army occupied, in mind, at least; and shows clearly how Alexander had realized the danger of rest. We may, in fact, date from now the more hectic part of his already feverish activity. He had learnt that he dared not stop; and many minor expeditions which do not seem to have grave military significance seem inspired by this compulsory restlessness, itself by no means, however, alien to his own character. This was the Alexander who gripped the popular imagination, an Alexander rushing whirlwind-like over steppes and through defiles; and even when he had to rest, occupying his men's minds, at least, by games, orgies, colonization, or marriages on a large scale. It is this, along with the need of constant loot, which seems to account

for the burning of the palace at Persepolis, where he was obliged, in the winter season, to stay some four months.

We are glad to think that Alexander rewarded a brave adversary, Mazaeus, with the satrapy of Babylon, setting two Macedonians, however, to guard him from any Persian lapse. Here we have at once Alexander's policy towards the conquered territories, a policy most wise and salutary, if not wholly within his own volition. Just so, Abulites, with two Macedonian watch-dogs, was made satrap of Susa, after which, taking the Uxians, as we say, and as Arrian often says, 'in his stride,' Alexander turned the Persian gates and reached Persepolis. His 'short ways' with impracticable passes were not the least wonderful of his achievements. *Potuit, quia posse visus est.* Whether by snow-covered sheep-tracks (as here) or by scaling impossible heights, as Wolfe did at Quebec, he had his forces ready in incredibly short times at the next important point.

On this march his speed was even doubled by the news that the royal treasure at Persepolis was about to be looted. The retrieving of the treasure, however, was damped by the sight of horribly mutilated Greek captives. While we are revolted, as was Alexander, who yet himself inflicted mutilation on Bessus – at the thought of maimed humanity, we should remember that Persepolis was apparently the prison

of Greek incorrigibles. Mutilation was in those days what a convict's dress and cropped hair is to-day, as well as a punishment for attempts to escape. Alexander did well to pity and succour these unfortunates; but there must have been many hardened old sinners among them. This sight, as well as a policy already suggested, may account for the subsequent destruction by fire or otherwise of such of Persepolis as lent itself to destruction. Alexander's sympathy to the poor captives gains pathos by their refusal to leave the home of their misery; and he settled them there, in small holdings, with labourers to do their work; what to many to-day, would seem perfect happiness.

The story of the burning of Persepolis is none too easy to disentangle, but so far as we can reconcile the accounts, Alexander removed the chief treasure, and then (deliberately, it would seem) burned the palace, leaving the general loot to be scrambled for by his troops. Radet (*Revue des Études Anciennes*) distinguishes three parts of Persepolis; the ordinary town, the citadel, the royal palaces. Of these, he holds, the troops looted the town; the citadel was preserved and garrisoned; and Alexander, after return from a short expedition, permitted one of the palaces to be burned.

Arrian holds the theory of a deliberate act of revenge for the Persian invasion of Greece. The

Thais story made popular by Dryden's 'Alexander's Feast' may be right; but if so she was only the torch that lit, not the will which planned the fire. Still, the real difficulty of the story of the burning lies in this – what was there to burn? The 'palace' and houses about it, may well have been built of mud (or bricks), with (perhaps) pine-supports, but these few in number, since Persis is not a wooded country. Such a building would not burn well. If, on the other hand – as ruins may suggest, since Sir Percy Sykes (*Nineteenth Century*, October, 1927) says that excavations of one of the massive ruins of Persepolis show marks of destruction by fire – the reference is to a royal palace, a pillared hall of massive stone, such as the palace of Xerxes, it would not itself burn at all; and though Curtius speaks of much cedar we can hardly imagine cedar in Persepolis in such profusion – as panelling, for example – that it would readily burn, save in isolated fires, though cedar beams and doors, if reasonably near together, and once well alight, might certainly burn well. We must also remember that the ancient house and palace had next to no wooden furniture, while it seems next to certain that valuable hangings would have been removed. Alexander was, after all, himself the Arch-Looter, 'canny' even in his cups, and his soldiery would tend to regard all Oriental things as valuables, *ignota pro magnificis*, so that we must not

think of the burning of any 'Ephesian pile of vanities.' No; the palace, of whatever kind, cannot well have made a great bonfire, and the story of an excited mænad firing an inflammable building with a torch, must certainly yield to the hose-pipes of the higher criticism. But the question still remains, how did the story of the burning arise? Perhaps some burnings were necessary to balance Persian burnings in Greece during the Great Persian War; if so, we may look in our authorities for other 'balancings' of the story, other incidents, that is, which arose as sets-off to the story of Xerxes' expedition.

While therefore the story of Thais must go, it is just one of the examples we need to study most, of popular impressions crystallized into folk-lore. We see what popular contemporary thought would rather like Alexander to have done; we see the melodramatic touch which popular imagination loved; and we see that whether Alexander's expedition was, or was not, an act of revenge, that the armchair critics in Greece were stirred at the news, and felt that dramatic justice had dramatically been done. Such a story helps us to understand much of the Alexander folk-lore which has passed for history, and further, to see how easy it was for this quite excusable folk-romance to develop into the wild fantasies of the later Alexander Romance.

The idea that the burning, or at any rate, wrecking, of this palace, and many buildings about it, was, in point of sober history, a great 'rag' permitted, and in part planned, by Alexander (he kept some discipline even in the worst of the orgy) may seem odd, but the position of a King far from his country, with troops led by the generals of the predecessor he had himself disowned, and with a long way still to go, was one of the greatest difficulty; and it is little short of a miracle that Alexander, with no amusements for his troops, save occasional athletic sports – no cinemas, no concert parties – kept his armies together as he did. Part of his success was due to his skill in detaching soldiers from the main body, either to send them home, or to settle them in new cities, or to leave them in garrisons, or to marry them off to daughters of the inhabitants. Then by new drafts, all primed and agog for adventure and plunder, he refreshed his force; but it is little wonder that, at first quietly, and later, quite boldly and openly, he conciliated the conquered Persians in all possible ways, and at last set himself up as a Persian emperor. That there was something of high policy in this cannot be doubted; and it must remain difficult to say whether the adoption of Persian ways, and the use of Persian guards, preceded and caused the frequent Macedonian grumblings, or whether the increasing reverberations of these grumblings urged

Alexander to complete the more rapidly this Persianism. But the two processes, the louder and louder growing discontent, the more and more pronounced Eastern attitude, went on together. One certainly cannot blame Alexander, and at least his own splendid example in the field was magnetic.

After Persepolis came the passage through 'frozen' Persis; and while the troops called for a return, Alexander dismounted and led them on foot, 'cutting his way with an ice-axe.' No troops could refuse such leadership.

And yet even Alexander must relax; and when he did relax, he flung to opposites, as did the Segismund of the Calderon play. Curtius gives us a picture of his reaction after the anxiety due to the dangerous activities of Agis, the Spartan king-adventurer; a highly coloured picture, which does not suggest the temperate Alexander of some historians. Curtius goes on to say that these lapses of Alexander in themselves invited trouble; and that 'hence came plots against his life; mutinies, and grievances; in himself, passion, suspicions, the result of blind fear.' This is a gloomy picture. Alexander almost seems to be saying 'Let me eat and drink, for to-morrow I may die by the assassin.'

At Hecatompylos, after the pursuit of Dareius, Alexander rested his troops, and there a rumour suddenly started that the army was to return at once,

since Alexander's ambition was now fulfilled. The alacrity with which the troops ran to pack up shows their feelings, and makes more remarkable Alexander's long retention of them in the field, while again it shows how politic was his conciliation towards his late enemies.

In Parthia, according to Curtius, came Alexander's complete lapse into Persian ways. The old soldiers of Philip murmured that victory was their worst foe, for here was the worst kind of defeat, and they would all be ashamed to go home again. Alexander, once more well in touch with these murmurings, 'lest mutiny should result, broke into this time of leisure with a new campaign, for which an excuse was most opportunely being nursed.' Once more restlessness staved off ruin: and the pursuit of Bessus drew the troops from another of Alexander's many Capuas.

CHAPTER VI

PERSEPOLIS TO MARACANDA

ALEXANDER'S stay at Babylon had no doubt taught him the dangers of long periods of rest for his army. At Persepolis he granted it only a brief repose, a month or so, and then busied himself and them with various expeditions in which he gradually subdued the whole province of Persis. During these, we are told, he faced, cold, frost, and even ice on the hills. Though the historians make a good deal of this, and of Alexander's own courage and inspiring example in overcoming all difficulties of winter and high ground, I cannot find cause for believing that ice, to the extent suggested, would really be met in the hills of Persis. But so his age, and the age that followed, viewed Alexander, as one who faced all known difficulties of weather and climate, on his eastern, as before on his more northern, expeditions. He was meanwhile ignoring Dareius, and what was worse, leaving to its fate the vast treasure at Ecbatana. Here Dareius' own hesitating cupidity was Alexander's 'luck' – he secured the treasure on his arrival. But long marching was not possible till the spring; and in the spring (330) some seven months after Gaugamela, he left Persis for the north. The loyalty of Dareius' great men might be tottering, but it still stood; there was possibility of a new

Persian army, and another Gaugamela; time pressed. On Alexander's northward move, Dareius fled towards Baktria, and did not rivet closer the loyalty of his subjects by spoiling the country as he passed through, in order to hinder pursuit. Dareius' selfishness at this stage forfeits all respect we may have formed for a prince fallen on evil days.

At Ecbatana Alexander had much work to do. A few years' campaigning had made him cautious and foreseeing. He had to form a sound military base, establish touch with home, and, what will always tax the greatest generals, reorganize his army in the field. He had clearly given up all expectation of a third great battle; Persis had taught him what was needed for minor expeditions; infantry would now be of less use to him; local food supplies would be scarcer; the need of fresh horses and transport animals would be constant; in a word, he must now begin his great eastward march afresh.

Alexander lacked nothing that went to make the greatest of generals, save self-control at the right moment. He was in touch with the smallest needs of his men; and as he goes farther east, besides greater reorganizations, we find him opening military hospitals, and remount depots, and clothing his men in some sort of helmets and puttees. Why he did not invent stirrups and horseshoes (the absence of which Droysen rightly notes) we do not altogether

see. He seems otherwise to have thought of everything. Whether it is right or not to say that Alexander got rid of the old feudal element in the army and turned it into a professional force, I am not expert enough to say. But he was now wealthy enough to pay his men well; and he may have thought it wise to try gradually to shear away as many of Philip's veterans as possible. Leave was given to Thessalians and Greeks to depart, while a new force of six thousand Greeks more than filled their places.

With a specially selected part of his renewed and partly reorganized force he began the pursuit of Dareius. Perhaps the news of his coming precipitated events long meditated, but for which there was now no real use. A revolution after Issus, and a strong man in Dareius' place, might have saved Persia. What actually took place was merely mean and cruel, and if done to cull favour from Alexander failed very miserably. After passing the Caspian gates, Alexander learned that Dareius, who must some time ago have lost all initiative, was a captive in the hands of his own people, led by one Bessus. The conspirators had a double plan, and fell between the two; one was to bargain by means of Dareius, should Alexander overtake them, the other to ignore or destroy Dareius and beat up a force enough to resist at least what Alexander might bring with him.

Alexander, to whom the possession of Dareius alive might have seemed to be a very great asset, made a vigorous effort to secure him; whether he went the right way about it is open to doubt. His hot pursuit probably sealed Dareius' fate; so rapidly did he move that he actually came in sight of the still unwarned Persians; the guard fled, and Bessus, on Dareius' refusal to follow on horseback, left him mortally wounded and fled for his life.

It was to be expected that later writers, duly recording the projections of popular imagination, would surround the death of Dareius with much moving detail. Such imagination, generally inclined to be charitable, fond of the chivalrous element of romance, and fond above all of forgiveness and reconciliations, would naturally soothe the sufferings of the abandoned King, and place in his lips an encomium of his conqueror. The scientific historians are no doubt on sure ground in giving few details of this sordid and sorrowful scene. Dareius was murdered because he could not be carried further, and it was dangerous to leave him alive. Dying and deserted, or it may be, already dead, he was found by the advance riders of Alexander's pursuit; Alexander himself could only see that the dead King was decently covered, and at length royally interred.

History therefore gives all that the sternest historical justice can demand; Dareius, himself a

usurper, is murdered by a usurper; the Great King, proverbially the happiest of mankind, comes to a sordid and miserable end; Alexander the conqueror behaves with proper reverence before his dead enemy; and the meanness of Dareius' end is obliterated by the splendour of his burial. Alexander for his part is fortunate in meeting a dead, and not a living, foe; he is saved from many embarrassments, and, what is of greatest import, he can now assume the style and dress of the Grand Monarque unquestioned, since the only rival now left was murderer as well as usurper.

Popular imagination was not content even with this. A Macedonian soldier finds the Great King still living, and parched for want of water; he brings it in his helmet; he does what little he can, and what a civilized Greek should do, to soothe the last moments of the dying King. The King himself (as Curtius gives it), refreshed by the cool draught from the spring, delivers what is almost a set speech; a speech of forgiveness and gratitude to Alexander and of charity and reconciliation with his conquerors in general. At the close Dareius clasps the hand of his kind comforter, a hand-clasp to be passed on to Alexander himself. Later times still imagined a tale that Alexander did find Dareius yet alive, and that the gratitude and conciliatory farewell were given to Alexander himself. In this there may indeed be

something of opera, if not of melodrama; but the popular instincts were morally, if not historically, sound; and they saw on the screen of history what they would like to have seen. That the actual, historical, romantic chivalry which certainly shone about Alexander in his earlier campaigns, and which he owed largely to Homer and perhaps to Aristotle, is the real basis of these further picturings seems clear; and the whole story, in its later developments, gives us an instructive lesson how to read history backwards, or rather, to read historical legend backwards into history.

It is a little difficult to understand why Alexander so passionately wanted to save Dareius, or at least to capture him alive. He would, as a close prisoner, always have been a great encumbrance, and could hardly have been of realizable or tangible value to his captor. The real pathos perhaps of Dareius is his constancy to his lost Stateira, but Dareius is a Patient Griselda among eastern monarchs, and is even thought to have cast away his empire in the hopes of regaining his queen, whose death, hastened by weary journeyings, must have made him long for his own. The danger of a captive Dareius would have been the possible awakening of sympathies for one who had forfeited all sympathies. Dareius fell on evil days, but what has been said of Alexander's 'good luck' holds good of Dareius' bad luck; good

luck has to be earned, and bad luck is often the wages of feebleness. On the whole we may feel that Alexander's good luck was with him when he found for Dareius, the shell of what had been Dareius.

There was nothing now to take Alexander off his direct line, and that was always eastwards. But his picked pursuing troops were worn out, and no doubt the hoofs of their horses also; and Alexander was obliged to risk a rest at Hecatompylos, a rest the more dangerous, since there were ample provisions, and the men received a bonus from the spoils.

One of Alexander's greatest triumphs must have been the persuading of his tired and now, for the moment, idle troops, that all was not over; that the great work was really just beginning; that the army was now one vast exploring party, ready to deal truly with any who barred their passage, but searching not for any serious rival potentate but for the blue encircling belt of Ocean. It is most strange that now, of all times, Alexander assumed more distinctly the style and isolation of an Eastern, when comradeship was more than ever wanted. In fact, on the death of Dareius, Alexander seems to have said to himself, 'Le roi est mort! Vive le roi!' But Alexander was always full of antinomies, and in his own person certainly bears out the view of Hegel, that antinomies are inherent in all persons and things.

Everyone who has tried knows how very difficult

is an effective out-of-doors speech to a large multitude, and we must regard the set oration which Curtius attributed to Alexander, as written up long after the event. Alexander did, however, win over his best troops, and they brought over the rest.

Once started, Alexander kept his men busy, and made raids into the hills of the scattered Mardian highlanders, south of the Caspian Sea. To do this he even took the extreme risk of travelling westward, which certainly seems to suggest that what he wanted for his army was occupation, and again, occupation.

Rest, however, was necessary once more in Hyrcania, and then strengthened by the Greek mercenaries who, having surrendered, had been pressed for service, he marched into Bactria in pursuit of Bessus, whom we may almost suppose to have been made a convenient temporary object of attack, so insignificant had proved his attempted usurpation. But another 'hare' sprang up in Satibarzanes, recently retained in his satrapy of Aria, but now secretly rebellious; and Alexander left Bessus alone for the time being.

The chief city of Drangiana, south-east of the Caspian, the modern district of Seistan, was to be the scene of a tragedy. Hogarth seems to suggest that Alexander, conscious of much disaffection in the army, and especially in the 'old guard,' seized a pretext to crush it by a judicial murder of Philotas

perfectly justifiable, in view of treasonable statements made by Philotas in the past, even if only in the privacy of his chamber or tent, but not justifiable on the precise grounds which Alexander chose. Philotas was no lamb, but Alexander certainly seems here to have played the wolf. The charge against Philotas was merely that he failed to report a danger which he does not seem to have thought a danger. It was at best an error of judgment. But Alexander, urged perhaps by newer advisers, chiefly Craterus, or believing perhaps that Philotas was determined to stop, if possible, the now useless (for so it seemed) eastern march, certainly struck and struck hard, and is to be excused only if Philotas was actually himself a great danger to Alexander's predestinate purposes. Certain it is that Alexander's action provoked very grave murmurs, and something approaching rebellion of the troops left at Ecbatana. I have suggested already a theory of Alexander's violences and sudden cruelties and injustices. He was not a Tiberius or a Nero, but he was becoming filled with the heritage of all despots, suspicion. And he had much yet to do before he died. The worst thing is that, if authorities – Plutarch and Curtius and their sources – are right, he was now something of a Louis XI also. The chief interest lies herein, that his age, and its successors, did see in the man who earlier had been a model of Homeric chivalry,

the Oriental despot which he proclaimed himself to be. If Aristotle's teaching was at all responsible, Aristotle must have been Hegel and Nietzsche in one.

If proof were needed of the suggestion in the Introduction that the *residuum* of any historical fact, especially in ancient history, will be only slight and attenuated, it is provided by the study of F. Cauer on Alexander's three 'murders'; that is, of Philotas, with Parmenio, of Cleitus, and of Callisthenes. Our authorities do not mix well. They use authorities in themselves contradictory. Despite most careful study, the student must nearly always 'come out by that same door wherein he went.' Plutarch and Curtius give good pictures, and Plutarch's picturesqueness attracted the attention and claimed the admiration of innumerable readers before Napoleon, through whom Plutarch may be said to have influenced modern European history. Plutarch is easily accessible; Curtius is less known; and I give therefore, with caution, his account, of these three important events in their place, on which a general estimate of Alexander's character, which all readers must certainly attempt to frame, so much depends.

The Philotas story (according to Curtius) began with a rather sordid beginning. One Dimnos (elsewhere mis-written as Limnos) told a certain Nico-

machus, with whom he was on terms of especial intimacy, that he had a very great secret to impart. Nicomachus must take a great and solemn oath, that he would reveal nothing. It is possible – here I desert Curtius for the moment – that Nicomachus, not used to Dimnos' more serious vein, thought the whole matter a jest, and with a solemnity that was mock solemnity, took the oath. At least he did so (here Curtius begins anew): they were in the precincts of a temple; we may wonder to what gods they supposed it (in Drangiana) to belong; but at any rate Nicomachus swore by the gods to whom the temple belonged. The oath thus assured, Dimnos revealed a plot to assassinate Alexander – many brave men being concerned – shortly; in two days thence, he said. At this revelation Nicomachus was in a grave quandary; he said that no oath could bind him to silence in so serious a matter; and we may presume that he felt that the gods who had been called as witnesses to his oath would approve the breaking of it. Be that as it may, Dimnos was obliged to resort to most earnest entreaty; Nicomachus at length – without further oath – promised not only silence but also to bear his part in the plot. But he had made up his mind, and on learning who were the conspirators, left the too trusting Dimnos, sought out his own brother Cebalinos, and took counsel with him as to his duty, burdened as he was with this so dangerous

knowledge. The brothers jointly decided that Nicomachus must not go about at all, lest he should meet one of the conspirators, but should stay in his tent. Cebalinos, however, took upon himself the dangerous duty of revealing the plot to Alexander. This, however, was not easy; he did not dare to enter Alexander's pavilion, and so was obliged to wait about till somebody should come out from it.

It so happened that there was only one man on guard in the ante-tent, and this was Philotas; Cebalinos, very nervous and hesitating, told him his story and begged him (this is an important point) to tell Alexander at once. Philotas then dismissed Cebalinos and went at once to Alexander, but did not tell him of the plot. Next day Cebalinos, very anxious, came to Philotas and asked if he had told the King, but Philotas replied that Alexander had given him no opportunity. Next day again Cebalinos was there; and Philotas said he had not forgotten; but still he said nothing to Alexander. Cebalinos became frightened, and told Metron, a page; and Metron went at once and told Alexander, who sent immediately and arrested Dimnos. When Cebalinos, whom Alexander questioned closely, said that he had twice asked Philotas to convey his news, Alexander burst into tears, to think that a friend so dear as Philotas should have shown such ingratitude as not to tell him at once.

Meanwhile Dimnos was brought in, but he was a dying man, for he had understood at once why he was arrested, and had dealt himself a severe wound: he died, indeed, in Alexander's presence. At once Alexander sent for Philotas and upbraided him. But Philotas answered that he had not taken Cebalinos seriously, and felt that he would only make himself ridiculous if he related these vapourings of Dimnos. But now, he confessed, the death of Dimnos made it clear that the talk had been serious indeed, and he saw that he had been in grievous error. (Here one may interpose the reflection that this remark of Philotas may have been quite sincere; and it fits the earlier part of his statement, that he believed the whole affair a mare's nest. Obviously the real gravamen of the subsequent charge was that Philotas knowing of the conspiracy, and taking it seriously, let it go forward for his own ends.)

At once a council was held, Philotas not being summoned. Nicomachus told his story, and Craterus, an enemy of Philotas, begged Alexander to recant the promise of pardon he had given Philotas, the other Macedonians applauding. A decision was made to interrogate Philotas, and compel him to reveal his associates. (This, of course, assumed Philotas guilty; moreover, the original conspirators had been revealed by Nicomachus.) Then the King left the council; steps were taken to

secure secrecy. At supper Alexander invited Philotas and spoke kindly with him; but at midnight came a band of higher officers and others (Craterus among them), who called out the King's guard, under arms, so that no message should get through to Parmenio. A large force, of three hundred men, surrounded Philotas' tent; he was sleeping peacefully, apparently enjoying the 'sleep of the just.' He was fettered, exclaiming, 'My enemies' hate, O King, has overcome your kindness.' Next day the army was paraded under arms; Philotas, much guarded, was brought in; his guards closed in upon him so that he should not be seen till the King had addressed the troops. Dimnos' dead body was exhibited to the somewhat astonished men. After an impressive silence, Alexander related his narrow escape, the soldiers being deeply stirred, even weeping. In his speech Alexander pronounced Philotas and Parmenio to be the chief guilty parties, but mentioned others by name, and pointed to the body of Dimnos, as he named him: at this a loud cry broke from the assemblage.

As an example of the work of the rhetorical schools, who rejoiced in writing up, with dramatic touches, and a good deal of genuine rhetorical, if not oratorical, effect, may be given the speech here attributed to Alexander. These rhetorical composers

naturally wrote what they felt that Alexander both might have said and ought to have said. They do not (as most of us do in actual orations) miss points; they get effects, if rather tinsel effects, by strong contrasts and by over-elaborated climax (a mistake never made by the Greek orators of the best period). One might be tempted to cast these made-up speeches aside as historically worthless. They are so, or nearly so, if we are merely concerned with the residuum-facts of Alexander's career. But if we desire to pursue the Alexander-idea in the minds of later generations, it is obvious that these artificial orations have a high value, just because of their artificiality. Opinions and views of Alexander and of chief incidents in his career (among which the rhetoricians did not so much reckon his battles) had crystallized by the time of Curtius; and in the elaboration of the composed speech we get what is really a considered and composite view.

Dimnos' body was carried in; and Alexander, his features composed to sadness, comes forward.[1] There was an impressive pause (this seems quite unlike the impetuous Alexander) and then Alexander began: 'Soldiers! I have been all but torn from you by the criminality of man; but by the providence and mercy of God I am yet alive. This sight of your honourable assembly made me feel a more violent

[1] Curtius, VI, ix. Brackets enclose my own running comments.

wrath against these murderers; for the chief, nay, the whole joy I have in life is to be able to render thanks to troops so courageous, who have served me so well.' At this point the speech was interrupted by the low groans of the troops, and all shed tears. (The Greeks, and presumably the Macedonians too, were prone to tears from Homeric times onward; and this need be no great exaggeration.) The King continued: 'How much greater emotion shall I stir in your hearts, when I reveal the originators of this foul crime! But as yet I shrink from naming them; indeed, I shall hold back their names, in the hope that they may yet clear themselves. But the memory of earlier affection must be crushed, and this plot of traitorous citizens must be laid bare. How indeed could I hush up so great a crime? Parmenio, with all that weight of years upon him, bound to me by kindnesses of my own, and of my father, the oldest of all my friends, set himself at the head of this treason. Philotas, his agent, won over Peucolaus, Demetrius, and this Dimnos, whose corpse you see before you, and others, whose heads were turned by a like madness, to make this attempt on my life.'

At this there ran a loud murmur of indignation and cries of shame through all the army; as one hears when a crowd, especially of soldiers, is deeply stirred by emotion or anger. Hereupon Nicomachus and Metron and Cebalinus were pushed forward, and

each recounted his own revelations of the plot. Yet none of them denounced Philotas as involved in the plot. And so, as their indignation had found vent, they now listened in silence. The King resumed: 'What sort of spirit, think you, was in him who, receiving sure information of this movement, kept it to himself? That it was sure, Dimnos' death has proved. Cebalinus feared not to report a plot yet unproven; Metron hesitated not a moment to clear himself; indeed he broke into the chamber where I was bathing; Philotas only feared nothing, and told nothing.' (The importance of this has been shown already; Philotas had plenty of time, if guilty, either to clear himself by confession, or to escape.) 'Courageous man! Was such a one to be upset by his King's danger, to turn pale, to listen, anxious, to one who should reveal so dastardly a crime? Surely that silence hides criminality, surely a wild ambition for sovereignty has driven this fiery spirit to the bottomless pit of evil. His father holds command in Media; he himself, pre-eminent in power among many generals, is puffed up beyond himself. He makes light of me, since I have no heirs. But he is wrong. In you I have children, parents, kinsmen; while you live I cannot be desolate.' (Here Curtius is at variance with himself in X, vi, where he mentions Barsine's son, Heracles.)

Then Alexander read the intercepted letter of

Parmenio, written to his sons Nicanor and Philotas; but it is true it did not give proof of any serious plot: its main gist was this: 'Look first to yourselves, then to your kinsmen, for thus we will achieve our purpose.' The King added that it ran thus so that if it reached his sons it might convey its meaning to them, since they had secret knowledge; but if it were intercepted, it might, to those who had it not, mean nothing. 'You may say,' he went on, 'that Dimnos, while naming the other conspirators, did not name Philotas. This, however, is proof not of his innocence, but of his power; so much is he feared even by those who might betray him, that while they betray themselves, they say nothing about him.' (The special pleading here is clearly not Alexander's.) 'But Philotas' whole life rises in evidence against him. He was friend and confidant to Amyntas my cousin, who in Macedonia plotted traitorously against my life. He married his sister to Attalus, my most serious enemy. When I wrote to him, as old acquaintance and friendship demanded, to tell him the reply of Zeus Ammon, he actually replied that he congratulated me, on being received among the gods, but was sorry for those who must live under one exalted beyond mankind. These are proofs of a mind long since alienated from me and jealous of my fame. All this, soldiers, I hid in my heart as long as I could: for I saw that I should tear

out part of my own heart if I had to learn to despise those to whom I had shown such generosity. But now it is not words that deserve chastisement; rash utterances have led to daggers; and these daggers, if you will believe me, Philotas has sharpened against me; if you believe him, he has at least permitted others to do so. Where then can I turn, my soldiers? To whom can I trust my life? I placed Philotas in charge of the cavalry, the best part of the army, and of the leaders of our noblest young men; I placed my safety, hopes, even victories, in his safe keeping. His father I elevated to the same rank to which you have elevated me; I put under his authority Media, the richest province, with all those thousands of troops and civilians. Just where I looked for protection, from thence comes danger. How happy should I have been to fall in action, a victim to the enemy, but not of a subject! Saved from the only dangers I feared, I have fallen upon those which I ought not to have feared. You sometimes beg of me, soldiers, to have regard for my life. You can cause me to do that which you beg me to do. To your hands and to your arms I fly for safety; I will not survive, if you do not wish it; and if you do, I cannot, unless I am avenged.'

A study of this speech will reveal how unlike the 'real' Alexander it is, so far as we can get back to the real. The argument is rather like the frigid argu-

ments of a Euripidean tragedy; indeed, there is hardly what we can call argument, since the guilt of Philotas is all along assumed. Curtius and those who went before him have made an emotional appeal – not in itself foreign to the character of Alexander – so far as we have got back to it; the contrasts, the climaxes, the sophistic half-proofs which run through the speech are of a common type; and the picture of Alexander given here, wounded, sensitive, indignant, just, severe, face to face with supposed ingratitude and treachery, is just what would appeal to the popular imagination of a generation sufficiently removed from the actualities of the story.

Then Nicomachus, Cebalinos, and Metron told their story, but none of the three so much as mentioned Philotas. All that really concerned him was this letter from Parmenio quoted by Alexander: 'Look first after yourself, and then after your friends.' Alexander then charged Philotas definitely with associating with Amyntas and Attalus, Alexander's old enemies. Then Philotas was brought forward, but instead of execration, a wave of sympathy met his appearance. Coenus, brother-in-law of Philotas, made fresh accusations, and picked up a stone (it was thought that he hoped thus to bring Philotas to a sudden death, and so avoid torture). But Alexander said that Philotas must first defend himself; and hereupon Philotas fell into a swoon.

On his recovery Alexander asked if he would speak in Macedonian or in Greek, and Philotas chose Greek, in which Alexander also had spoken. Alexander did not wait to hear the speech, but left the assembly. There follows (in Curtius' account) Philotas' defence, in which we learn only what we already know; a cry of anger stopped him, and he was indeed in danger of being slain there and then, but that Alexander returned, and put off till the morrow any final judgment. Towards evening the council was held again, and the general vote was to stone all the accused at once. But some (Craterus and Coenus, with Hephaestion) demanded that Philotas be tortured; and Alexander, after giving some secret instructions, retired into his tent to await results. On seeing the instruments of torture, Philotas acknowledged himself guilty, but Craterus demanded that this confession be repeated under torture. At first Philotas remained firm, but soon he promised to reveal all, under an oath from Craterus that there should be no more torturing. None the less, when Philotas delayed, Craterus called back the executioners; whereupon Philotas begged for time to recover.

After a time Philotas affirmed (and Curtius leaves it open, whether he spoke true or false) that he and Parmenio had been urged to free the Macedonians from the tyranny of Alexander; they had waited, he

said, till the death of Dareius; but he had nothing to do with the conspiracy of Dimnos. On this Craterus (apparently ignoring his oath) recalled the torturers; till at length Philotas agreed that he had known of Dimnos' intentions, but that Parmenio, his father, knew nothing of them. With this intelligence the leaders in the inquiry went off to Alexander.

Next day the confession was read to the army. Demetrius, who was also accused, denied all; but Philotas, who had been carried to the spot, summoned one Calis and bade him check Demetrius, 'lest I be tortured once more.' Calis then confessed that he and Demetrius had been in the plot; and on this everyone who had been named by Nicomachus was, after Macedonian custom, stoned. A strong feeling of sympathy swept over the Macedonians for Philotas and his father. But Alexander summoned the army before his pavilion, and delivered over to them a new victim, Alexander the Lyncestrian, now two years a prisoner. He was able only to stammer out a feeble defence; and was despatched with spears. Amyntas, Simias, with Polemon, captured while escaping, were next tried; but Alexander pardoned them, and the scene ended in graciousness and peace. But Parmenio was not to escape; Polydamas, Parmenio's close friend, was sent post-haste to Ecbatana; there he delivered to Parmenio a letter from Alexander, and a letter from Philotas. While

Parmenio was reading the second letter, Cleander struck him down. Something like a mutiny was only quelled by reading out Alexander's commands.

This story of Curtius, while rich in details, has various contradictions, of which two may suffice: Nicomachus 'repeated' in public what he had told Alexander; but he had not approached Alexander; Alexander laments the instability of his friend Philotas; but between Alexander and Philotas had long been a rift. Curtius uses two traditions without harmonizing them, and without himself actually deciding what were the true facts.

What can we ascertain? Certainly there was a conspiracy. But was Philotas entirely apart from it? And did he confess only under stress of torture, and perhaps with the added torment of a guilty conscience, to a conspiracy formed indeed in his brain and discussed with one or two reliable friends, but never yet crystallized into a tangible shape? Did Alexander merely seize the pretext of Philotas' silence over the real, but perhaps less serious, plot, to crush this other plot suspected, or more than suspected? Did Philotas, knowing himself doomed, merely seek to avoid torture, if he might, or if not, to lessen it, by a confession of more than he need have confessed? And did he drag in Calis and Demetrius from a rude sense of justice to himself, or because he knew that they could not escape, and that

a swift death was better to them than death with torture? Historians are fairly agreed that Parmenio's death was mere murder. The old Marshal must often have been galling to the young Emperor. Parmenio had too often been, as it were, the ghost of Philip present below the battlements, urging just what Alexander was not inclined to perform. It seems to follow that Philotas' 'treachery' had not gone far, if his father remained innocent. As for the Lyncestrian Alexander, he was not judged and condemned in due form, nor put to death after the Macedonian custom. It is hard to think that he was not thrown to the still ravening wolves. But as to the depth of Philotas' guilt, historians will continue to dispute; all we can say is that the proof of it seems incomplete.

Far more important to our present purpose is the light thrown on Alexander himself. These changes of mood (if truly reported), the forgiveness of Philotas, and his arrest, the speeches to the assembled army (who traditionally judged cases in the field), the withdrawals and the postponements, the permission given (at least) to apply torture, the formality of Philotas' final condemnation, contrasted with the despatch of Parmenio's friend with orders (so it must seem) for his assassination; all this, and even a small part of all this, should only a small part be true, seems enough to show Alexander not

wholly master of himself; certainly not master of his leading officers, though able to sway the army itself according to his will; he was, in fact, a medley of inconsistencies and antinomies, which seem to suggest little short of panic. In the mist of detail of Curtius, and in the comparative clearness and conciseness of Arrian, following Ptolemaeus, we can grasp something of the central figure, not quite the hero-king of some modern historians. But by his own personal ascendency always shown in time of crisis, he wins through unscathed, and rids himself of men who were certainly a smouldering, if not an active danger. The fact was that Alexander was now so openly Persian and relying on Persian numbers that he dared do this thing. The mutinies which followed, no doubt direct results of Philotas' and Parmenio's death, were the risks he could now afford to take; only Alexander had not reckoned on something else, worse, to him, than mutiny, which wrecked his dearest hopes.[1] The devices of making up a 'crime-battalion' and a rigid censorship of letters seem attested by evidence.

Alexander's ferocity towards Bessus, who deserves much of what he got – the facts are Ptolemaeus' – is now quite explicable. Alexander, himself a Persian monarch, must punish fiercely treachery to his

[1] I mean the 'Great Strike' on the River Beas, which checked the further exploration of India.

predecessor, even though, in avowed intention at least, it had been an act highly favourable to Alexander, the Macedonian invader. We can hardly realize how the continued existence of someone who could still 'wear his tiara erect' held together Easterns. He was still the 'king-bee' to the hive. Bessus was to be a warning, and his final condemnation was by his own countrymen. The treatment of Bessus makes more intelligible the massacre of the Branchidæ, which followed.[1] Here Alexander is the Greek – not even Macedonian – invader, avenging the yielding up of the temple treasures to Xerxes. Was it only a pretext for massacre and loot, cruelty (even inconsistent cruelty) being better than possible mutinies? Certainly the army followed on, helped in their new devotion by Alexander's courage and many acts of chivalry and consideration to his men.

Once more Alexander involved his army in a regular series of raids, many of which must have been quite unnecessary to his main purpose. A combination of the various tribes which he attacked would indeed have been serious, but they lacked unity, and could not have done any great damage on the march, if Alexander had kept, as no doubt he did, a strong rearguard. But he irritated comparatively harmless peoples by smoking out their hives, and paid for it

[1] Curtius, VII, v, § 28 (also Plutarch and Strabo, and epitome of Diodorus, a lost portion of Bk. XVII).

by the retreat through the Gedrosian desert. This was all the more remarkable since there was in this hill-country very genuine cold, and the troops, whom Alexander might well have wished to cosset, suffered much.

Alexander's city-founding is one of his very remarkable achievements. Perhaps he had himself, almost certainly his experts had, a very shrewd – if not exaggerated – idea of catching all the trade of the East, now opened up almost from its farthest bounds, so far as contemporary geographers knew. A series of cities populated by his own Macedonians, and later by a half-caste growth, on the great eastward routes, not so very far from the encircling stream of Ocean on which the laden argosies might comfortably and safely sail round into the 'inner sea' – this was a dream indeed. How far Alexander, a multi-millionaire thanks to his own leadership, his troops' endurance, and the comparative feebleness of his adversaries, troubled about trade, we do not know. No historian has, I think, been vulgar enough to suggest trade as actually a dominant motive with Alexander. But it was probably a dominant motive with the clique of experts who had much to do with his plans and organizations; and many of his soldiers must have looked forward to a large shop in some great bazaar, full of Oriental glories, cheap to buy, and rich in profit, as the end of their wanderings.

That all Alexander's city-foundings had not this coveted result is proved by the rush home, after his death (for only a few had dared to return before) from the Alexandria founded in Kabul. But that he settled city after city with a people not renowned as colonists, and that so many of these went on and flourished, is one of his greatest triumphs.

Alexander's next step, after the subjugation of the Paropamisadae (Kabul) was the serious pursuit of Bessus, on whom Dareius' mantle had indeed descended, since he allowed Alexander to cross, unimpeded, the Oxus on tent-skins wrapped about bales of straw. As Dareius had been betrayed, so Bessus was betrayed, by his own followers. One can hardly quarrel with Alexander's savage treatment of the miserable man.

Every biographer of Alexander must, however, feel himself in great distress and difficulty when in the order of his chronicle and of geography he comes to the story of the Massacre of the Branchidæ in Sogdiana. One would like (as many do) to pass it over in silence, and there an end. But unhappily it has the attestation of Curtius, Plutarch, Strabo, and Diodorus (whose account is lost; but it was evidently included), and this means also of the authorities accessible to them. The story was that the Branchidæ, in charge of Apollo's temple near Miletus, had given its treasures to Xerxes. This was

treachery; and when the descendants of these traitors, whom Xerxes had settled in Sogdiana, came to meet the Macedonians as fellow-Greeks, Alexander set the Milesians in his army as judges over them; and when they hesitated, himself became judge, and ordered all the population to be massacred. One would be very grateful to Tarn (*Classical Review*, vol. xxxvi, Nos. 3, 4, 1922) if he had really wiped this story off the slate.

There is evidence that Alexander allowed other massacres; that for this massacre he had the excuse of piety towards Apollo (*tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*), and it may also be that he acted from a sudden nervousness, since these Branchidæ may well have incurred his grave suspicions. The important thing is that it was not held incredible that Alexander, the popular hero, should (either from piety, or from cruelty, or from a pious cruelty) have done this thing.

CHAPTER VII

MARACANDA TO THE HYDASPES

It seems so strange to find any limit to Alexander's marches, that it is with some feelings both of surprise and relief that we can fix a definite northward mark, Alexandria on the Jaxartes. Irritated by rear-guard and flank-attacks by the hillmen, Alexander pursued some of these into their almost inaccessible fastnesses, and received himself an arrow-wound in the leg. These punitive expeditions must have wasted much time and have been fruitless, since the punishment of one tribe would hardly deter another; and the conclusion is forced upon us that Alexander must keep his men busy at all costs, and that long stretches of unbroken marches were as distasteful to them as long rests were dangerous to him. Alexander himself had intended to attack the Scythian Nomads from his new foundation – but the opening never arrived. In a pursuit of a small party of the Nomads who irritated him, Alexander and his army suffered from want of water; and in drinking inferior water he suffered a sharp and dangerous illness. During winter he rested perforce in Bactria, where he received fresh troops from Greece. It was here that he had leisure to attend to Bessus, who though brought before a mass meeting of Macedonians, was punished in a thoroughly barbaric

manner by mutilation, after which he was sent to be condemned by his own people and at length slain. In a further delay at Maracanda occurred the lamentable and quite inexcusable murder of Cleitus, repented too late with tears. The occasion desires some discussion; it arose out of one of Alexander's very few defeats, though he did not himself share it; a detachment of his Macedonians had been cut up by Scythians. Any defeat of any part of troops is a defeat of the commander-in-chief; but Alexander was now so far apart from his commanders – if not yet from his men – that he did not so much sympathize with the destroyed detachment and share the shame of its destruction, as glory, by contrast, in his own unbroken success and even pour contempt on the defeated commanders. It is true that Alexander was drunk; but a commander-in-chief has no business to be drunk, and an Eastern potentate had no right even to be drinking with his subordinates. In fact one is almost driven to the conclusion that things would have gone better if Alexander had kept up his pose as an Eastern Emperor more thoroughly; the trouble was that all along he wanted to be two things, the inacessible 'Majestät' and the hail-fellow-well-met boon companion among companions. At this banquet, while obviously acting the Macedonian feudal king, he yet accepted praises only due to the greatest of Great Kings. *In vino veritas*; in

his cups he spoke more than his mind about those whose bleaching bones had brought shame not (let it be noted) on his own country, not on his own strategy, but on his own private escutcheon. The tragedy of Maracanda arose because both sides were at their extremest; Alexander of haughty self-content, and the older Macedonian officers of indignation and even fury. Cleitus, in common phrasing, asked for trouble. He put the matter sharply. 'Either do not ask us to dine, but withdraw among your barbaric suite, or be a freeman among freemen.' The last straw was the reminding of the All-highest Emperor that he had owed his very life, on the Granicus, to the underling who thus upbraided him. The whole miserable scene is one where Alexander is immeasurably the inferior of Hannibal and Napoleon, and even of Nâdir Shah, who yet slew his own son. It was as a Macedonian that Alexander rose and sprang at Cleitus, and it was for a Macedonian weapon – happily, for the moment, withdrawn – that he felt. Curtius, whose account I give, even says that Alexander himself spoke open evil of Philip, and so revealed what he had already allowed to appear, but had probably never yet put into words. Once more, *in vino veritas*. But Cleitus, besides being irritating beyond endurance, was dangerous, for he condoned and regretted Parmenio; and that might mean the bursting into

flame among the army of a long-smouldering indignation.

This murder, for so it certainly was, presents no special problems, nor does it much assist us to attempt, as historians do attempt, to apportion the blame between murder and murdered. Alexander's own deep regret and repentance made quite clear that the incident ought not to have occurred. Cleitus, as Alexander himself confessed, was his best friend.

With the cautions already given, I here follow again Curtius. At Maracanda, in one of those intervals of rest which seem always to have brought trouble to the restless Alexander, a banquet was held. Alexander proposed, at or after this banquet, to declare Cleitus satrap of Bactria in place of Artabazus, and Cleitus was specially invited. Both Alexander and Cleitus were heated with wine, and Alexander began to boast of his achievements. This was received with respectful silence; but when Alexander went on to depreciate Philip's achievements (a quite unnecessary corollary), and declared that he had saved Philip's life, and that Philip rewarded him with a grudge, rather than with gratitude – with sundry other statements of the kind – the older officers present began to chafe. (This story of the ingratitude of Philip, whether true or not, must be borne in mind in the sequel, when

Cleitus not unnaturally reminded Alexander that he also had been saved in battle.) Cleitus quoted some lines of Euripides to those near him; the lines were apposite, since they suggested that not only the names of the great, but also of the lesser men, should be inscribed on war-memorials. Alexander, suspecting that the quotation had some such trend, asked what it had been. The rest kept silence, but Cleitus spoke out boldly, praising Philip's greatness above Alexander's. This was to cast an apple of strife between the older and the younger officers; the King listened in silence, but with growing wrath, to the dispute. Had Cleitus now kept silence, all might yet have been well; but he warmed to his work, and went on, even setting Philip's victory over Athens higher than Alexander's victory over Thebes; and finally, after recounting some private grievances, and a spirited defence of Parmenio, declaring to the King, 'How comes it that you have conquered Asia with all these youths? That is true, which your uncle said in Italy, that he fought men, and you women.'

At this the King, already bitterly wounded by the commendation of Parmenio, broke into wrath, but not yet into open wrath. Controlling himself, he bade Cleitus withdraw. Cleitus hesitated, perhaps was not capable of rising at once; but those near him hustled him towards the exit. As he went, Cleitus cried out (what Alexander wanted above all to pre-

vent him crying out) that Alexander owed him his life, but had forgotten to be grateful. Either unable, or no longer desiring, to restrain himself, Cleitus further broached the question of Attalus' death, and spoke scornfully of the oracle of Ammon. Alexander sprang up; the guests sprang up too, anxious to check a catastrophe, but Alexander seized a lance from a guard, and tried to strike Cleitus, but Ptolemaeus and Perdiccas held him back. Plutarch says that, at an earlier stage, Alexander threw at Cleitus an apple; Arrian says that some authors say that Alexander used a sarissa. The sarissa would be a very unwieldy weapon to use in a crowd; and we may wonder whether Plutarch's 'apple' was not perhaps one of the spears of the 'apple-bearers,' a spear with an apple or pomegranate at the butt. On the other hand we have, among rare scraps of mere newspaper gossip of the period, a note of one Dorotheus, who may possibly have been a doctor, that Philip and Alexander were both 'very fond of apples.' This may explain the presence of apples, or something of the apple or quince kind, on the table at this banquet; 'Persian apples' were perhaps peaches, and 'Median apples' probably citrons.

Alexander cried out at the restraint laid on him; he was, he said, like Dareius, arrested by his friends; and he ordered the bugle to sound an alarm, which would bring the troops, under arms, to the

citadel. At this Ptolemaeus and Perdiccas tried what entreaty could do; but Alexander was past entreaties; he rushed out, seized a spear from a sentry, stood at the doorway, and when Cleitus came, last, he asked who it was. 'I am Cleitus, and I am leaving the assembly,' was the reply, which was at once followed by a mortal spear-thrust, Alexander exclaiming bitterly, 'Go now to Parmenio, Philip, and Attalus.'

Alexander's grief was in proportion to the fierceness of his anger. He even caused Cleitus' body to be brought into his pavilion, and his thoughts turned to Lanice, his nurse or foster-mother, Cleitus' sister, and mother of two sons who had fallen at Miletus. 'Her I shall never dare to look on again,' he cried. 'I could never give her my hand without thinking of her sorrow.' The Macedonians did the best they could, by holding a trial, after death, of Cleitus, and declaring that he had been justly put to death.

This skilful blend by Curtius of different accounts is satisfying and vivid as a narrative. Could we accept Curtius as he stands, we have a dramatic and life-like account of certain great scenes in the Emperor's short career. When analysis sets to work, we see many details fall away, or indeed cancel each other, till we are left only with the bare elements of a festival, a great cleavage between the older men, Philip's men, and the younger men, Alexander's

men; a too outspoken champion of Philip; a blaze of anger, and a murder at white-heat of fury, with a tearful repentance.

Yet it is just in the fillings-in of the picture that the value lies. The murder cannot be denied; the over-drinking both of Alexander and of Cleitus cannot be denied; the gulf opened between the older and the younger Macedonians cannot be denied; the bitter taunts of Cleitus must be historical, at least in part. But popular imagination, always kind to its heroes, makes most of the provocation which Alexander certainly received; of his mastery, till that provocation passed all bounds of his growing wrath; of his deep regret and repentance when he came to himself. Nor can we altogether fail to see Homeric influences at work. However inappropriate, the sorrow of Achilles over Patroclus reflects itself in the sorrow of Alexander over Cleitus, a sorrow no doubt sincere; and the whole body of Macedonians are pictured (for this can hardly be historical) as uniting in condemnation of Cleitus, and justification of Alexander. This is what is thrown upon the screen of history, and we would hardly have it otherwise. That Alexander does not 'abide our question' is a mark of his greatness.

As soon as could be, Alexander, driven by furies of remorse and anxiety, put his army in motion again. He was more prominent than ever in meeting and

braving dangers and fatigue, and seemed to seek tha death which had been denied by his own spear in the moment of his remorse. At least his operations resulted in the defeat of the Scythians and the death of Spitamenes.

Attracted by its reputation for invulnerability, he stormed the Sogdian rock, and captured thus his bride Roxane; and then passed to an only less inexpugnable stronghold, called the Rock of Chorienes. At Bactra, where he celebrated this unpopular marriage with the daughter of a small chieftain, he raised a local force from Bactria and Sogdiana of some thirty thousand men. It may have been their presence which made him flout more than ever Macedonian ideas by insisting upon 'worship' from all alike. He had thought over the fatal talk of Cleitus, and despite his repentance for the murder, now took, and held, his line, and that was the line of a barbaric despot.

We almost wonder if he so much as repented of his share in the next sorry tragedy, which also arose from a banquet scene, and from the fulsome adulation of the vile Anaxarchus, answered, more wisely than worldly-wisely, by the philosopher-historian Callisthenes.

It is no part of this study of Alexander to take sides. The point of the whole study will, indeed, have been missed if it is not clear that its purpose is

to see Alexander, a spirit (or 'monad') among spirits, and subject not only to contradictions or antinomies which the most balanced of us all contains in his inmost being, but – being a great spirit among spirits – partaker of the contradictions of the many as well as of himself; and, even more than this, gathering together as a reflector gathers rays, and reflecting also, outwards again, the ideas, notions, 'projections,' of his age and all ages that come after. Surely here will be so multiform a character and so mixed a picture that the pro-Alexander of one moment may be the anti-Alexander of another, and as for the partisan historians, who have in fact been this, or that, I can only reproach them with overmuch consistency. History and biography are constantly seeking what they have no right to expect; they look for fixity in the kaleidoscope, and they expect the film, with a whole excited world as audience, to stand still. When it comes to a matter of moral judgment, we must give that judgment, with the best part of us, on each particular aspect or motion of our subject; and we must hope that not even the most devoted pro-Alexandrian will really approve of drunken violence. Callisthenes, for his part, was almost certainly a 'prig,' and a prig is more irritating than any moral lepers. He had probably preached too often to Alexander, who must as often have sighed to be rid of this insistent, if not turbulent,

sage. But Alexander was commonly most unsuccessful in his pretexts for his actions. The story of Philotas is enough to show this. The story of Callisthenes is a strong fellow-witness. The odd thing is that Callisthenes was a nephew of Aristotle (from whom, it is true, Alexander became estranged) and himself a panegyrist of Alexander. One can only accept the solution of Grote that the Alexander whom Callisthenes praised was not the Alexander that was now coming into being. Callisthenes, like Philotas and Cleitus, had and kept his own mind. He could not join the crowd of mere flatterers, and we must honour him for it.[1]

One cannot fail to be struck with curious parallels which run through the whole story of Alexander. Both Philotas and Callisthenes perish, as being concerned in a plot of which they may have approved, possibly even indirectly suggested, but in which neither appears to have been a prime conspirator. The origin at least of both plots appears to have been independent of these two ultimate victims. The story of Cleitus and Callisthenes has its parallels in

[1] One is reminded of the story, which I relate from memory only, of Bishop Ken and a brother Bishop walking with Charles II. 'Sir,' exclaimed the other, 'you are the breath of our nostrils!' 'Oh,' replied Charles; 'and what do *you* say, my Lord?' 'Sir,' replied Ken, 'my brother here no doubt says what he feels.'

that both make set speeches of a declamatory type, and both the one and the other are spokesmen for a considerable party of Macedonians. There are other minor points of coincidence. Elsewhere too we find parallelisms; the Hyphasis 'strike' and the Opis mutiny; Alexander's lament for Cleitus and his lament for Hephaestion; his bathe in the Cydnus, and his bathings during his last fever; the emulation of the deeds of Heracles, and the emulation of the deeds of Dionysus; and a good many more. It may not be over fanciful to see in these parallelisms the workings of the popular imagination, which works on set lines, and either creates incidents to match others, or at least stresses especially their coincidences. In any event, the Callisthenes story does show many points of contact with the Philotas story. Curtius here indulges his taste for the rhetorical perhaps more than elsewhere, and we must make allowance for this rhetorical element in studying his account, which runs as follows.

Before the Indian expedition, Alexander desired to establish his 'divine' status. Though such 'divinity,' and the 'adoration' which recognized it, would have different connotations for Persians and Macedonians, we may question whether the finer distinctions would actually find play. Outwardly, at least, Persians and Macedonians were to observe a similar ceremonial. A big banquet was arranged,

and during the meal itself Alexander was not present (this in conformity with his purpose, since the Great King did not dine with his officers). Apparently by arrangement, Cleon made a speech in which he suggested that mere gratitude for his achievements should grant to Alexander the attributes of divinity. Something like direct 'hits' were made at Callisthenes, whose independent spirit in this matter was known. Callisthenes (wisely or not) replied in a speech, which we have in Curtius in a strongly rhetorical form. He pointed out the complete difference which separated gods from men, and worship of gods from any worship of men, however exalted. He taxed Cleon with being a 'maker of gods,' but the bulk of his speech is on a high level, as might befit a philosopher, and is based on principles, not merely on arguments which might fit some expediency, or might apply only to some special case. It was clear that Callisthenes, as here reported, was speaking what a large part of his audience would have liked to say.

The King had been within hearing of this debate, hidden behind a curtain (as, according to some accounts, he had been hidden during the torture of Philotas) and was naturally not pleased with Callisthenes' remarks. On Alexander's entry, the Persians performed the desired ceremony; but a foolish and unseemly scene followed with Polysperchon, whom

however Alexander shortly forgave. Callisthenes remained firm.

Not long after, one of the royal pages, Hermolaus, thinking to save Alexander from a dangerous boar, anticipated Alexander's own spear, by slaying the boar, but, so far from being honoured, was punished, in the fashion usual after a misdemeanour. The injustice (as he felt it) rankled; and a plot was formed to assassinate the King (the beginnings of this plot are not unlike those of the Philotas plot). This was frustrated by a prolonged drinking party – it was said that a prophetess, who followed the army, warned Alexander, who had retired from the party, to rejoin it: the pages remained on duty all night, and were actually praised and rewarded by Alexander for their attendance; and no opportunity came for the assassination. In the interval before the next turn of duty Epimenes, one of the pages, told his brother (here also is a parallel with the Philotas story), and the brother, Eurylochus, took Epimenes with him to the King's tent. Leonnatus woke the King, who questioned the brothers. Callisthenes was mentioned, not as a conspirator, but as having listened sympathetically to the pages' grievances. Alexander had all the guilty pages, and Callisthenes, arrested; then he returned to rest.

Next day an assembly was called; Alexander asked Hermolaus point-blank what he had intended, and

Hermolaus answered boldly. The King followed with a long set speech; the guilty parties were handed to the assembly for judgment; they were tortured and put to death, and with them Callisthenes. The popular feeling turned to sympathy for Callisthenes (as before for Philotas) after his death.

It is quite impossible to get at the true facts of this conspiracy and its conclusion. We cannot even be sure about the death of Callisthenes; some say he was kept under arrest and died later. It is difficult to resist the idea that here, as in the case of Philotas, Alexander used a conspiracy independent of Callisthenes to rid himself of a dangerous or disagreeable follower, and that it was Bactra, rather than Chaeroneia, which was 'fatal to liberty.'

Hogarth rightly lays stress upon the isolation of Alexander at this period.[1] He had lost, by his own hand or sentence, some, who if candid, were probably stalwart friends, and he had no doubt broken completely with the old Macedonians. His mother was causing him much trouble in Greece; and he had always been a mother's boy. Odd, indeed, that he should turn for consolation to a foreign captive, no better than a chieftain's daughter, and to the bowings and scrapings of a foreign court. And yet there was some method in this madness. If Alexander had broken with the old world, with his new levies he

[1] *Philip and Alexander*, p. 135.

was building up a new one. Why not be of, as well as in, this 'brave new world'?

One thing is certain, that after this 'Pages' Conspiracy' – the interest of which is, first, the wrath of Alexander at an act intended to save him, the noble behaviour of the pages under torture, and the extreme hatred shown towards Callisthenes and, with him, Aristotle; towards, indeed, all that was Greek – after this conspiracy, Alexander rushed off towards the Hindu Koosh, and a sigh of relief must have gone up from the weary army when they moved again. 'Alexander's halts,' as Grote, for the moment become Gibbon, says, 'were formidable to friends and companions.' In India all seemed to go well. Not that hill tribes did not give trouble; not that Porus' great army on the Hydaspes was negligible; but Alexander had now the way of fighting Eastern troops, and if he remains the one general who won all his battles, he certainly never met, since Chaeroneia, his own standard of fighting, and there was never that 'pull-of-war' which follows when Greek and Greek are opposed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HYDASPES TO THE HYPHASIS

Two main points of psychological interest occur in the march to the Hydaspes; one is the joy of Alexander in storming 'Aornos,' and so outdoing Heracles;[1] the other his conscious parallel of himself with Dionysus, who was said to have made a great expedition into India and of whom direct indications seemed to reside in certain proper names. These exploits of hero and god, sons of Zeus, thus outdone by Alexander, son of Zeus, seemed to emphasize Alexander's divinity as something above the ordinary. Superman, he was also super-divine. Thus, while still abjuring in one sense Philip, Macedon, and Greece, he was able, in another, to pose as a cosmopolitan hero, worthy, if any, to become a world-emperor. Surely Macedonians and Persians alike must follow such a one anywhere. Weary though the troops may have been, the crossing of the Indus must have been for them an inspiring moment.

The battle on the Hydaspes deserves a special account, even though the details of battles should as far as possible be relegated to professed military his-

[1] The account given by Arrian of this plateau or ridge seems rather fantastic; attempts are, however, made to identify this Aornos. Sir Aurel Stein places it north of Amb, just west of the Indus, on the ridge called Pir-sar. See above, p. 9.

tories. It was perhaps the only battle where Alexander was really hard put to it (this does not mean that he did not incur great risks elsewhere, especially in smaller encounters), and the victory was almost certainly his own work.

Beloch attributes Alexander's earlier successes to Parmenio's influence, advice, strategy and tactics. It is quite certain that Alexander's figure in history has dwarfed the figures of his contemporaries, Philip included. This would happen in any event; but Beloch may be right in pointing to deliberate belittling of Parmenio also in the official records. Some of the traditional boastful remarks of Alexander to Parmenio do seem unlikely; at the Granicus, Parmenio advises an encampment, and a morning attack. Alexander is supposed to have replied scornfully, 'I have crossed the Hellespont with ease; I do not purpose to be stopped by this stream'; but, according to Diodorus, he did encamp and did wait till morning to attack.

Parmenio may indeed have done much towards Alexander's successes, may indeed (as Beloch thinks) have won them. There were other sound generals besides, on whom Alexander may, after Parmenio's death, have relied. But in the Hydaspes battle the evidence is that it was Alexander's own work. In this battle are shown not only courage in action, but other characteristics which mark Alexander's mili-

tary achievements: a remarkable eye for geographical features, a cunning adaptation of tactics (including various clever military tricks), and a readiness to meet new fighting arms not only without flinching, but with a great deal of bold dash in counter-attack. The picture of the dripping troops lined up on the bank of the hardly-crossed river and forcing their victorious way right up to Porus himself is a striking one, and should be the best remembered of Alexander's battle-pieces.

The battle had to be forced as soon as possible, since Porus (for so we must call this chief of the Pūrus tribe) might win large reinforcements and make the coming battle a national, instead of tribal, affair. Moreover, the chief had taken a very bold line, even though he could only muster his own tribe, and had cast defiance at Alexander, the very last thing which Alexander could endure. By this boldness, added to his courage and knightly behaviour in the battle itself, Porus won for himself both the retention of his kingdom (slightly extended) and the approval of history.

But in any case, Alexander knew by bitter experience that an attack must not be delayed. Everything depended on his army fording the river, and yet he had to make the attempt with the river swollen with rain. If ever later opinion could point to Alexander's 'good luck,' it was in this crossing of the Hydaspes,

Alexander's organization was, as usual, expert. Boats were brought over from the Indus, in sections. One cannot exaggerate the energy put into this Indian expedition, under extreme heat, which swelled the river, even before the rain of the night before the crossing, by the rapidly melting snow. The Indians may have felt reasonably secure, even when they saw the small flotilla launched. A full river is a splendid barrier, especially against an army relying largely on cavalry. Then there were the elephants, and even if they should fail, there were chariots; but elephants alone usually scared horses not specially trained to them. One of Alexander's, or his staff's, great features was a belief in a thorough knowledge of the country they had invaded. So far as in them lay, they explored and reconnoitred all accessible neighbourhoods; and it was this excellent habit which made the battle of the Hydaspes possible. A likely if difficult crossing-place had been observed at some distance from the camp – we do not know whether above or below; and Alexander determined to make the attempt. In order to be able to cross unmolested, for it would in any case be a very hard task, the enemy must be put off the scent. A series of nightly alarms and nightly movements went on in the Greek camp, accompanied with much shouting of commands and much singing of songs. All this suggested unrest; but arrivals of provisions,

observed during the daytime, seemed rather to promise a long settlement of the Macedonians by the river-side. The object was achieved; the Indians were kept constantly on the alert, till they began to look on the night alarm as a regular thing. But it does not appear to have struck any of Porus' officers that these recurrences might be hiding something. In fact, Alexander withdrew part of his troops to the crossing-point, and prepared the crossing; and finally, the usual disturbances being made in the usual way by the large body left behind, a definite move off was followed, at dawn, by the crossing which, had it failed, must have stamped Alexander for ever as a madman. Boats were loaded, and made for an island, which hid their movements from any possible Indian scouts. Thence they headed for the bank, and on reaching what they thought the bank the troops disembarked, only to find that the storm had isolated this portion of bank from the true mainland, and that a deep channel ran between.

To be caught there was fatal; the Indian archers would soon shoot them down; and those yet to come would not dare to approach. But after many fathomings, a ridge was found where men might wade breast-high, and men and horses somehow made their way over. Everything now depended on time. The Indian scouts, who seem now to have been

watching the river near or at the point of crossing, Porus not being as blind as perhaps Alexander supposed, hurried off with the news, and a swift force of cavalry with some chariots was sent off at once. But the Macedonians were already drawn up, and a body of Asian mounted archers met the Indian squadrons with showers of arrows. When it became quite clear that the enemy force was a detachment only, Alexander threw in his Macedonian cavalry, which, though perhaps exhausted, and certainly wet, much outnumbered the troops under Porus' son, who left their young commander lying dead and fled to the main body. What damage the chariots might have done but for the rain of the preceding night, we cannot say, but each chariot offered at least three marks to skilful archers, and to hit any one of these three marks, a horse or the driver, put the chariot out of action. In any case, the comparative uselessness of 'freak' forces was again proved. Porus accepted this first blow manfully; he left a small force to watch the Macedonian camp, under Craterus, and marshalled his army in proper array to await the Macedonian attack. Porus, indeed, seems to have done nothing foolish or unsoldierly; and but for Alexander's most fortunate surprise he might well have succeeded where the Persians failed. But his troops possibly did not share his own coolness, and the defeat of the advance cavalry had no

doubt discouraged them. The Indian army seemed designed to represent, and to possess, the impenetrability of a fortified town. The elephants were at intervals like so many towers; the intervals were filled, or 'curtained,' by infantry. On the wings were cavalry, with war-chariots in front.

A frontal attack being next to impossible, Alexander decided on his usual method of a flank attack on the enemy's left. And we may here marvel at two things; the one general, that so obvious a gambit should not regularly have been foreseen and forestalled (as Dareius foresaw and tried to forestall it at Issus); the other particular, that Porus had for some reason allowed Alexander to be riverward of him, which meant that Alexander was liable to be strengthened at any moment by the remainder of his own troops crossing the river, which was there fordable. This we cannot explain; Porus had time to put his army in due order, and might, it seems, have chosen his ground. His permitting the Macedonians to open the battle can hardly have been a 'fatal mistake' (as Bury calls it), since an army which relies largely on elephants is not primarily an attacking force, and certainly was not drawn up so as to allow of attacking. It certainly looks as if Porus made no serious error, except in not leaving his left wing on the river bank and so taking the risk of the Macedonians from the other side coming across to

develop a flank attack. What he did, upon the right-wing movement of Alexander's troops, was to bring round his cavalry from his own right to stop the gap. But Coenus had already hurried along the river bank (the usual arrangement of historians, here followed, assumes that Alexander crossed northward of Porus' army and his own camp, and so came southward to the attack: though this is not certain) and was ready to take these cavalry squadrons in the rear; this, at any rate, is the best we can make of the movements of Coenus.

The driving in of the Indian cavalry crowded the main body, and the elephants became rather a danger than a help. The Macedonian foot contrived to break in, and the battle was really won before Craterus and his men got over the river, as they contrived to do, without opposition. Porus made of himself and his elephant a rallying point as long as there was any hope of a rally; then he surrendered, not, indeed, to Alexander's first messenger, Taxiles, whom he would regard as a traitor, but to his second, in whom he recognized, or thought he recognized, a friend. His request to Alexander, that he might be treated 'royally,' and his commentary, that the one word 'royally' included everything, have become famous. It may have been his kingly bearing, it may have been Alexander's consciousness that his victory had not yet assured him India, which won

clemency for Porus, and his retention of his kingdom as Alexander's vassal.

On the Hydaspes, without knowing it, Alexander had marched into a new empire. There he had triumphed over a brave adversary. On the Hyphasis, or Beas, he learned that brave men were ready to bar his way farther east. All was grist that came to Alexander's own mill; but his army, which would not openly mutiny, understood something of passive resistance. Officers and men alike refused a step farther. They were, they said, already utterly out of touch with Greece; to proceed was madness; their plunder was useless to them; they had had enough of tropical rains.

Alexander did what he could; he waited two days, in hope of a better mind, and then he sacrificed as if to cross the river, and truly, or falsely, reported the omens as unfavourable (omens coming from his father Zeus) and – with, no doubt, a heart of lead within him, and already a broken and embittered man – gave the order 'Westward Ho!'

Alexander is always great in triumphant advance; yet here he is perhaps at his greatest. There is no vain bluster, only dignified exposulation; no assertions of divine right, no commands as if from on high; 'he nothing common did, or mean, upon that memorable scene'; but he bowed, at length, to the people's will; democracy had triumphed, after all.

One point of interest in this strike lies not in the obvious war-weariness of troops who had done so much, but in the plain fact which came out in the army's simple refusal to budge a step farther eastward, that loot is valueless when it is merely carried from place to place. Had there been some means of realizing this plunder and banking the proceeds in the name of the owners, there would probably have been no strike; new levies, even at this distance, could be brought out, and, indeed, relays of troops had been joining the main body at intervals. But plunder here was merely the jewel which the cock found on the dunghill, or the ocean, with not a drop to drink. The army now, at any rate, thought of itself, and not of its half-divine leader. The leader was thinking of geography, and we must try to see what he was thinking to understand the depth of his bitterness. Alexander was explorer to the bone. No passion perhaps grows on one like exploration. Set a man in charge of a fleet, or of an army, and he is free to indulge his passion to the full. Alexander certainly was the last man not to do so. He certainly meant to go on; and we may here, partly in retrospect, consider a question which awaits an answer: Did Alexander at this period really propose to return to Macedon? Not, surely, to settle there; we can hardly imagine him, any more than we can imagine Ulysses, settling down to a quiet life at home.

Before long Alexander, like Ulysses, would have set off to seek a newer world. But did he (at any rate after Issus) seriously contemplate return? From the Hyphasis, or Beas, he had, indeed, to return, at whatever cost, to some spot from whence his war-worn and travel-worn men might be convoyed to their country. They, at least, still hankered for the humble homes of Macedonia; and the scene on the Hyphasis proved that he had not inspired them with the same love of the East by which he himself was constrained. What, after all, did Macedon hold for him? A termagant mother (whom yet indeed he loved), the quelling of tribal outbreaks, punitive raids into Greece, long impoverished, and never a rich country. Carthage and Rome were hardly worth his steel after Persia and India.

Such may have been his own ideas. That he had no aims of world-conquest when he set out is proved by the inadequacy of his force; that the answers of the priests of Ammon did not necessarily stir him to world-conquest is clear enough.[1] What does, however, suggest that he proposed a gradual migration of Macedon, and of any loyal and willing Greeks, into the land of milk and honey he had conquered, is his line – a rather irregular line – of trade-cities,

[1] And in any case is proved by his coinage, which does not carry his own head (except possibly under the disguise of the young Ammon).

and his encouragement of peaceful settlement at places rather commercially than strategically convenient.

It is true that at the outset he took with him, besides military experts, a little horde of writers, surveyors, town-planners, and so on; but it was only later, when all Asia was thrown open by his genius, that the great works of construction took the place of the great works of destruction. At some point, probably after Gaugamela, his thoughts seem to have been as much on peaceful settlement as upon warlike operations.

If he really intended (as his cities certainly suggest) a great, if gradual, Greek migration, leaving Greece to its feebler stay-at-homes, his return by Gedrosia, and not along the line of his new colonies, is difficult to explain. But his mind seems to have been set on Ocean; and to coast along Ocean, or the bay of Ocean which lay between the Indus and the Persian Gulf, meant a combination of ships to carry provision for the troops, and troops to find and guard fresh water for the ships, as well as to gather what provisions they could find along the shore.

Once at Babylon, Alexander seems to settle down (though still full of schemes of exploration); the great marriage-scene, the rather sudden production of his trained Persian troops, the settlement of his own troops' debts, all seem to show that here had come the time to stop, and that here, and not, after all,

at the Egyptian Alexandria, was the central capital from which he would rule the East and yet keep some grip on the almost discarded West. If something of this kind was growing, after Issus or after Gaugamela, in Alexander's mind, we can see a further reason beyond that of mere personal glory in his whole-hearted 'Persianizing,' and a more conscious and adequate – if selfish – scheme of Hellenization than that with which he is usually credited.

Alexander's view of the world was that of the geographers of his day. We have Eratosthenes' description of the world, and can reconstruct his map. The world was circular, and the continents were more or less circular strips enclosing an inland sea. Outside (on the outer rim of the plate, so to speak) ran Ocean. Whether Alexander thought or not that he had wellnigh touched the northern flow of Ocean, we cannot say; but he thought the Caspian was an offshoot of this northern Ocean which would run, therefore, north of the Himalayas and bend downwards where Asia met Europe with a sweep from north-east to south-west. As Ocean had its offshoots, so there would be offshoots of the encircling strip of land, the inner rim of the plate. Alexander (his own words show) thought he was close upon that eastern land-crescent, and his aim and ambition was to march with his army, and sail with a fleet, along that crescent, and upon that encircling ocean, till he got

to Libya, and so home. If Alexander sighed for 'more worlds to conquer,' he meant it literally; for he had as good as conquered, and meant to complete the conquest of, the world as known to him and to the best scientists of his day. The Persian Gulf would prove another offshoot of Ocean, being, in fact, an 'opposite number' to the Caspian. He would build ships when, marching not so very much farther to the East, he had met the encircling Ocean; they would voyage round till they found, and sailed up, the Persian Gulf, and then returning back to Ocean, still the circumference of the circle, would work round Libya and to the Pillars of Heracles, and so back along the north of Libya, conquering Libya, the opposite segment of the circle to Asia, and so becoming master of at least three parts of the land of the world. Grote speaks of Alexander's 'prodigious error,' but it was no great error;[1] we have merely to imagine the world, as then conceived, squeezed into a circle; from the inner rim of land which ran alongside the outer rim of ocean ran inward slightly irregular stretches of land, probably like the segments of a cut orange. The Mediterranean was presumably the true central sea. It was all very simple and symmetrical.

[1] Grote himself points out that in later times (of Columbus) the East, instead of being squeezed into the circle, was unduly prolonged eastward.

Nor was Alexander's original idea that the Indus was also the Nile unduly fantastic. We see the Indus in our Mercator's projection, running north to south, and Nile running on the whole south to north. Alexander would visualize Indus as curving round, with a curve similar to that of Ocean itself, and of the rim of land inside Ocean, and Nile as curving in an exactly opposite curve; why should Indus, therefore, not actually be Nile? It seemed rather obvious. Only when the Indus was found to run into the Indian Ocean, Alexander found out his error.

All this, then, makes Alexander's own idea clear enough. He would sail and march round the whole, or nearly the whole, known world. I labour the point to show the extreme bitterness with which he must have felt this blow. His grandiose plan – beside which the achievements of earlier explorers, of Heracles and Dionysus themselves, were a mere walking tour – barred and blocked! To lose so much by so little! This must indeed have been more than embittering.

But the troops would not listen to geography lessons. For them the whole business had been a splendid failure. The really remarkable thing in this story is that Alexander did not go Berserk-mad with grief. He kept his head. He was still a fiery soldier, a cool commander; he planned the return with care;

and cleverly enough, rather on what must have been his original lines; fleet and army together, working on a crescent-shaped coast (for so it must have seemed to him) and in an ocean which, if not the great Ocean stream, was yet a portion of it on the south, as the Caspian was on the north.

But one cannot help feeling that Alexander was from here onward a broken man. His work was no longer to conquer anything worth conquering; only to carve a way through, and to get his fleet safe home: and his almost frantic joy at the arrival of Nearchus, after the sufferings of his army, is very intelligible. No wonder if even before he knew his fleet was secure he conducted that wild and ridiculous orgy through Carmania, imitating, and perhaps not unsuccessfully, the fabled revels of Bacchus and his train.

CHAPTER IX

THE HYPHASIS TO BABYLON

It is one of the remarkable qualities of Alexander that he goes on getting greater and greater, more and more wonderful, up to the end. The withdrawal, which one must certainly not call retreat, provides the best reading of all Alexander's campaigns, and shows Alexander himself both at his bravest, in battle, and at his strongest, in the miseries of the desert. Failure is written over the whole story of the Return. It began with Alexander's first real failure; his failure to carry his army, worn with marching and drenched to the skin, beyond the Beas into another glorious but conquerable unknown. This turning-point I have already discussed. It is not without many difficulties. Alexander quite certainly offered the usual sacrifices which preceded the crossing of a river. They were unfavourable. But what did that mean?

The 'official' account seems to have given out that Alexander offered the sacrifice despite the expressed decision of the troops; and indeed in that all seem agreed; and that he bowed to the will of the gods, not of the army. Did Alexander see to it that the omens should be unfavourable? It does not seem like him. Did the officials in charge of the omens see to it? Such things have been known. The priests of Bel seem to have done something of the kind later

on. We must, I think, conclude that to Alexander at least *vox Dei* and *vox populi* both pointed the same western way. His choice of route has already been considered, nor does it much matter whether the fleet was to support the army or the army the fleet the more. Part at least of Alexander's dream was to come true; his ships should navigate a bit of Ocean, if it should prove Ocean. He with his troops would be exploring new country, though he had reason to foresee what that exploration would be like. All this makes clear his resolve not to travel over again the more or less known line of communications, which would have given a valuable opportunity of keeping touch with satraps and seeing how fusion of races was beginning to work in the new cities.

Many things remain inexplicable in Alexander, and his campaigns or large-scale raids on the way south are very difficult to explain. Why, for instance, his attack, almost a furious and unprovoked attack, upon the Malli? What had they done to incur the wrath of the divine one? It has been suggested above [1] that many of Alexander's raids on apparently harmless hill-folk were ordered to keep his army always fleshed; but now there was no need for that, with the troops stepping westward, and only longing for their farms and homesteads again. Nor were the Malli dangerous to any communications, as some of

[1] Chapter V.

these hill-men might have been. It all seems the most pointless affair, and yet it gave Alexander the opportunity of his highest act of courage, bordering near on rashness; and this act of courage again may have gone far to account for Alexander's wonderful hold on his men [1] during the horrors of the retreat. It was in a sense 'just like Alexander' – at any rate the Alexander whom we know from Arrian – to perform his most valorous deed, to win his Victoria Cross, in an attack on an apparently harmless people, and in storming a fortress which did not, apparently, call for storming. Alexander, the Commander-in-Chief swallowed up by the ardent soldier, seized a ladder and pushed his way up to the battlement. It was 'just like Alexander,' when there was clearly only one thing to do – to jump – to jump into the fort and not out of it. Astonishment of your enemy is a great ally; and the paralysed defenders gave Alexander one precious minute in which to set his back to the wall; his three followers leapt down too; one was killed at once; Alexander himself was felled; but before his two guards could be beaten down, the rest, a furious mob of avengers, had by one means or another scaled the wall, and Alexander was saved. It was 'just like Alexander,' again, that he insisted

[1] There was one break-away, when the famished soldiers broke the seals of the grain-deposits left for the fleet. To this crime Alexander turned a blind eye.

on being set on his horse when to move was almost to faint with pain; and hardly Nelson was more dear to his men than Alexander to his at that moment.

Alexander might be put to bed, but his brain went on working, as it did in his last illness. He plans with remarkable care the voyage of the fleet, led by the truth-speaking Cretan, Nearchus. From this time on he certainly had his eyes keenly turned upon the world's waterways. He had, in the rainy season just past, seen enough of land communications.

Nearchus' voyage must be read in Arrian, who becomes quite Herodotean in the telling of it. All fell out well, despite hardships and the terrible surf of the coast, despite whales, savages, and an island where at least there should have been a sea-ogress. Alexander's depots failed; but Nearchus, thanks to some tact, some piracy, and a readiness of his sailors to eat whatever was at all eatable, got through. But he had to be most careful what men he allowed to go ashore, even in that desolate strip of coast. The sailors deserted – one wonders whither and to what, but anything was better than the terrors of that voyage under that stern old admiral. The story of Dionysiac revel through Carmania becomes almost credible[1] in the light of the joy of bringing through

[1] I say almost credible; I doubt if we can accept it; but it is worth while remembering, what in the glamour of the past we may forget, that Alexander, to the last, had something of the irresponsibility of

rumoured that he had died in the Gedrosian desert; while the lion was away the jackals had played; there had been general embezzlement and theft, and even plundering of Cyrus' tomb.

As far as remedies went, Alexander showed no lack of verve and insight; but it meant that government of Persians by Persians had proved a failure, and yet that was the central feature of his system. Some of his own generals, too, had to suffer with the Persian governors, in whose place Macedonians were now appointed.

The cancelling of the soldiers' debts was a revival of the old cancellations of outstanding debts, such as was attributed to Solon in Athens. But it was cancellation in due order; Alexander himself, out of his great, but not inexhaustible, treasure, paid all claims. The fact that some soldiers seized the opportunity of his generosity to falsify accounts to their own advantage, and that nearly all were suspicious of some trick, goes to show that Alexander and his men, despite their chivalrous suffering together in the desert, had fallen much apart.

As for the ten thousand and eighty marriages, they proved of no great account, and there were a good number of desertions later. The interest there lies in Alexander's error, or the error of his advisers, in supposing that marriages of Macedonians with Asiatics would produce fusion of race. The Greeks

might hold strange views of heredity, eliminating the mother, as, to some extent they did; but as far as race went, they realized that race always went with the mother. The only hope for proper fusion was to celebrate as many marriages as possible the other way about: and that meant a great Eastern influx of Hellenic women as well as men. Would they go? It did not seem likely. If, however, they went with their own Hellenic husbands, you had merely a Greek race growing up side by side with the Easterns, and were causing racial confusion rather than racial fusion. It is this consideration, to which Alexander can hardly have been blind, which makes me believe that he contemplated a wholesale transplanting of Hellenes to the East, as an enlargement of the Hellenic colonization of Asia Minor; and that he left the question of racial fusion to take care of itself. His great wedding feasts at Susa were only a sort of outburst of general domesticity after long travel and toil. Alexander might hold festival; he might pay debts; he might make brave plans for the future; but he must have been sick at heart. He had learnt that he could not be emperor of a new and vast Eastern Empire and an explorer at the same time; and his haltings at Susa and Babylon certainly suggest some halting of his mind between two opinions: whether to accept the inevitable and become the mere administrator of the new Empire,

or to let it go, and plunge into unknown regions north, south, and west. Of all historical characters Alexander's mind is hardest to fathom, and all we can say is that he was not the man to devote himself to office work, to draw up schemes and plans, other than military, and to write marginal annotations on the reports of his viceroys. And the absence of any settled or consistent plan for the government of Asia, save the building of cities and the training of Oriental youths to form a militia, lends colour to Grote's view that Alexander's followers, and circumstances arising in their day, largely unforeseen by Alexander himself, must really get the credit for that which we generally call the Hellenization of the East.

So passes the time at Susa; weddings on the one hand, conversations with ascetic fakirs on the other;[1]

[1] These conversations seem clearly 'written up' by philosophic essayists, probably Cynics. Similarly, some of the great speeches we get in Arrian, such as the speech of Coenus on the Hyphasis, Alexander's reply, Alexander's speech at Opis, are very probably based on 'fair copies' of the rhetorical school, for whom Alexander, on this or that occasion, provided many an obvious *declamatio*. The ancient writers gleefully incorporated anything which seemed to do their work already for them. *Benedicti*, they cried, *qui ante nos nostra dixerunt*. Orators include portions, more or less germane, of other orators. Historians went to the 'tubs' of the rhetoricians. It is this quite blameless but quite uncritical habit which must keep us from treating ancient authors too seriously, and above all, from pressing the *argumentum ex silentio*.

but there hangs a kind of ominous dank about it all, and we do not wonder that Calanus, who burnt himself on a great pyre at Susa, is said to have remarked to Alexander, 'We shall see one another again at Babylon.'

Looking at Alexander's life merely as a sort of drama, which we may construct at will, it certainly appears that there is no way of closing it but by his speedy death. He could not go beyond his achievements already recorded, and Alexander as an anti-climax is unthinkable. He was not the man to settle down to administration. His proposed explorations, which sounded so well, would have been a disappointment, merely trouble and half-finished work.[1] We really cannot project any reasonable future for Alexander, and in that sense we must say that he was *felix opportunitate mortis*.

In recalling the Greek exiles, a breach of the promise of non-interference with Greek states, Alexander showed that the weight of all Greece, as of all Asia, now rested upon himself. The task was getting

[1] I paraphrase from Goethe's well-known words (*Iphigenie*); the passage, which every historian must constantly carry in mind, roughly translated, runs thus:

> 'Our forefathers' great deeds; how fine they sound! . . .
> Yet all the time, to them, – as to us now –
> It was but toil and trouble, empty toil,
> And trouble half-achieved.'

too much for any one man, and vigorous and resilient as Alexander was, we may rightly look on him now as broken and worn in mind, if not in body. The mutiny – for this time it was mutiny, and not passive resistance – at Opis must have been a terrible blow. He dismissed the veterans; the rest of the troops clamoured for a like dismissal. They had seen enough of the East. His personal triumph, partly due to an uncontrollable loss of temper, than which, on occasion, nothing is more politic, and partly to his genuine appeal to sentiment, is one of the finest episodes of his career.

While Alexander's harangue at Opis is no doubt one of the many 'fair copies' of the rhetorical school which have found their way into the histories (and, so long as they are understood to be no more, they are for our purpose most valuable), the main incidents of the riot are well attested, and throw a very considerable light on the state of things which we find at the end of Alexander's great expedition. In the first place, this rebellion arose from a misunderstanding; and that means that Alexander and his troops were – indeed, had long been – far apart. The suspicion aroused by his scheme to clear off the soldiers' debts is another indication of this cleavage. Secondly, this revolt was both the result of this long cleavage and the last protest of Macedonia against Alexander's Persian ways and his now pronounced

reliance upon Persian troops. It seems strange to find a Macedonian king ordering to instant death Macedonians who protested against his un-Macedonian ways. So, however, it was; and in this dramatic flash of all his old energy Alexander is on the side of the 'barbarians' against the Hellenes. It has been suggested above that by sending home the veterans and the war-worn, and by the heavy drafts made on his army by his city-founding, Alexander was consciously and deliberately ridding himself of his older troops, and surrounding himself with younger men more likely to be amenable to his modernizing ideas. At any rate, the older men at Opis, to whom he graciously gave leave to return home, so understood the matter. Their instant cry, 'He is getting rid of us,' at least expresses what had long been simmering in their mind. We call this a misunderstanding; it may, however, have been an understanding, all too correct, of Alexander's real ideas. Moreover, the taunt of the troops, if rightly reported, 'He can carry on his work with his so-called father,' reveals the popular notion of his expedition to Ammon, and suggests that Alexander had long been eliminating all thought of Philip. The riot went on. Alexander was unarmed. But he acted with a swiftness which might have marked his early youth. He leapt down from the platform into the midst of the mutineers, and seized those nearest

to him, who had possibly been most audible in the tumult, and ordered his guards, who remained loyal, to take these and others off to instant death. He was obeyed; the mutiny was over.

His speech followed at this point: and it was here that (following perhaps some genuine tradition) the rhetorical schools thought fit to insert an encomium on Philip, as an answer, no doubt, to the taunt of the mutineers. This encomium may have been both original and, if so, sincere; it certainly served the turn of the moment. Its value lies in this, that it does rightly attribute to Philip the uplifting of Macedon into a nation among nations, and it does rightly emphasize how very recent and how rapid this elevation was. To the praises of Philip succeeded a long account of Alexander's own achievements, and they make no small list; of his proofs of personal bravery, which not the most critical of historians has ever questioned; and of his generosity, which, after he had acquired the treasures of the East, cannot be gainsaid. Indeed, it is thought that Alexander's liberality, despite these immense treasures, must, had he lived, soon have rendered him bankrupt.

With a dramatic 'Begone!' – for that, and not 'Dismiss!' is apparently the meaning of his last word – Alexander descended from his platform and went to his quarters; and there he stayed, shut up, to let

his insubordinate army learn that it was helpless without him. This, indeed, was true. Never was an expedition so much the affair of one man; and Alexander's recent isolation left even his most trusted generals quite in the dark as to his ideas and purposes. But Alexander had another means of bringing his army to heel; and we must admire his courage if not altogether his wisdom. On the third day he placed the Persian troops in the positions usually held by his Macedonians, announcing to them formally that this was a final and deliberate order; and then it was conveyed to the Macedonians that they must quit their camp, or else choose a leader and fight it out. This – to find that they were not indispensable – at once broke the army's resolution; a reconciliation followed, dramatic and picturesque enough; all was well again, or so it seemed; but it was, in fact, a completer humiliation of his own countrymen than the Persians or Indians had suffered in the whole long campaign. The veterans, again dismissed home, this time departed.

Biographers and historians may well pause, as usually they do, after relating the story of Alexander's death, to paint a glowing picture of Alexander's conquests and glory.

A great stillness seems to fall upon the world; it is like the silence at the battle of the Nile after the blowing up of the *Orient*; all history seems to pause,

dazed and expectant. But it was not really so. Alexander's death precipitated, not quelled, activity; the great prize of power was there for 'the boldest' to pick up; and such as felt emboldened to run the risks of power began at once to manœuvre for the prize.

If we are to stop and contemplate Alexander's greatness, it should be after his quelling the mutiny at Opis; for his personal ascendancy over his troops, there re-won, was the one and only unfailing basis of his success.

Let us, then, forget for the moment certain dark moments in his hitherto career; let us forget that this great empire, which fills so formidable a page in our ancient atlases, is soon to be rent asunder and portioned off; let us see our hero bestriding a wide world, that has been subdued with a breathless swiftness; and we shall acclaim him rightly the wonder of his age, and of all ages. Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers of Mesopotamia, have felt his hand; India – farthest India, as then it was – so far away that the best geographers figured it as running west and east, with Ocean on its southern shores – had heard his 'legions thunder past,' not disdainful and unresisting, but resisting and overcome; and meanwhile half-forgotten Macedon dared not forget her Chieftain-King, who was now, besides, a mighty Emperor. We may dispute the meaning

of human greatness; but as mankind generally understands greatness, we may contemplate it in Alexander as in none other. And yet, all the time, his real greatness was yet to be born. It was when his marshals, righting some of his errors, but successful only so far as they inherited a portion of his spirit, began to carry east and south the gospel of Hellenic civilization that the true work, brilliant and lasting, of Alexander as a great creator and paver of world highways, and the great co-ordinator of the Hellenic civilizing agencies and influences, was first truly realized. Romance and fiction have woven airy webs about his name; but the utmost extravagances of the one and the other are hardly extravagant; they are only the gilded ornamentation of the reliquary which enshrines a precious fragment of truth. In the story of Alexander's career we have seen him unbalanced here, uncontrolled there; wasting his time and his men on harmless hill-tribes and fantastic marches; but here, at the end of one, and at what was to have been the opening of another orgy of victories, we can only see him, what all ages since have seen him, 'the Great.'

Then comes, at Ecbatana, the death of Hephaestion, the one man, it seems, to whom Alexander could now unlock his soul, for he had long been terribly isolated. We need not trouble to discuss Hephaestion himself. But the loss of him was clearly

the loss of Alexander's last link with the outer world. At any rate, Alexander broke out into a storm of grief whose violent savagery brings back again to our mind Calderon's Segismund. His grief was his own; the mourning he made the whole Empire's. He turned to raiding, subduing the Cossaeans, and explored the Babylonian waterways, giving proof of marvellous insight and skill, which led to the putting right of much that was wrong, since the Easterns, after their fashion, left the waterways to work by themselves.

The Arabian expedition during the winter and spring was being got ready and equipped, and would now start shortly. The date of his own sailing was but a week off when a sudden fever, caught perhaps in Babylonian canals, struck down the busy Emperor, and in a fortnight he was dead. His constitution must have been marvellous, or he would have had many such attacks of fever before this, and we only know of that in Cilicia. His wound received among the Malli, followed by the sufferings in the desert, would have killed most men. We need not seek, then, the cause only in the all-night revel with Medius, though that may have hampered his power of resistance. During this illness we hear of no physician; and the daily bathings can hardly have been right for a fever-patient. Alexander had crucified the physician who had attended Hephaestion,

and others did not readily come forward. Or it may be that Alexander was this time definitely afraid of poison, and a later rumour suggested that there was indeed 'death in the cup,' called the 'Cup of Heracles' – a big goblet, perhaps a loving-cup. The practice of drinking off without a breath would make poisoning easier; but the evidence is against poison. Alexander did, however, feel very ill after drinking the 'Cup of Heracles.' But Alexander was both active and imperious, even on a sick bed, and the approaching date for the sailing of the fleet kept his mind busy when it should have rested.

Before the end he lay as it were in state and his men passed through his room. Some of the marshals watched all night in the temple of Serapis; they even wanted to convey him thither. That those marshals, when he was almost past speaking, asked about the succession, shows how utterly isolated Alexander had long been. Of Roxane, Stateira, Parysatis, we hear no word. His whispered answer was unintelligible, and was interpreted as the marshals chose.

With his death everything seemed to come to an end. All that was left was for the marshals to pick up the apple of strife that lay upon the board; after a decent interval, they did so with a good will, but it is interesting to note that the struggles opened in long-deserted Macedon.

The remarks of the Introductory Chapter must

especially apply to this story of Alexander's death. Details of his illness are, as we have seen, set down in the Diaries – so many 'dead' facts, which means what we are accustomed to call 'accurate' facts. The interest to us is elsewhere – without at all impugning facts, or accuracy, which are essential to the real work of history. It is, then, clear that the contemporary mind saw Alexander's death as a great tragedy, in the full sense of the Greek tragic idea. Apart from the 'tragic touches' mentioned above, the death of so unique a genius, so unparalleled a conqueror, at the age of thirty-two, was itself a tragic event of the most unusual grandeur, and deeply impressed contemporary and later thought. Clearly the mind of man is essentially dramatic; life is tragedy or comedy, or tragi-comedy, not chronicle. Thus people seized on salient points; the coming event had thrown its shadow before (though we see now more clearly that such 'shadows' and events are one and indivisible); and we hear of the usual omens and warnings.

But no one has suggested, what I venture to hazard, that Alexander died of a broken heart, not because there were no more worlds to conquer, but that he had not really opened with his sword the one world which lay before him. His malady began on the Hyphasis, as I read it; Hephaestion's death completed the wreck; new plans were very well, but

it was the old plan to which Alexander's thoughts harked back. He knew he had failed; for in this sense he had failed.

But otherwise also he was *felix opportunitate mortis*. His method, which was military, could never have Hellenized the East. It was only when his marshals took each his portion and, freed from military ambition, and desire of conquest and exploration, settled down to govern and organize, for well or ill, that the benefits, for which Alexander had most surely paved the way, became possible. Alexander might have gone on conquering and conquering; but he had conquered enough, certainly all that then mattered; and there were higher and better things than conquests. Speculating is of no use; but those who do so should enquire whether Alexander's Macedonians would have followed him north, south, or west-ward. Or, what is more pertinent, whether Alexander could have dared to venture with them again. The great strike had partly already produced its reaction, an imminent lock-out. Things were best as they were, and Clio and the Fates were working in concert.

CHAPTER X

THE ALEXANDER-PICTURE

THE *Cambridge Ancient History*, the latest scientific work dealing with Alexander,[1] summarizes his character, in four close-woven pages, and then his aims; and passes on to consider the growth of the Alexander Romance. Alexander is the last personality in history to stand still to be photographed; but a clear and careful picture is given of him as essentially the man of energy (the Force); a great general; and, perhaps, a great statesman. This summary is based upon the facts, and the facts are chiefly based upon the 'good' tradition, which means in the main, Arrian. Arrian, we know, used chiefly Ptolemaeus, and Ptolemaeus used very largely the official journals.

If we really knew 'the relation of official truth to the truth' we should, as historians at least, have little trouble with the 'facts.' But that is just where we break down. My present purpose is not to solve that unknown. We may fairly assume that the official documents would be favourable to Alexander, his aims, his methods. If so, we may equally assume that whosoever followed the documents (Ptolemaeus), whosoever followed Ptolemaeus (Arrian), and whosoever follows Arrian (the majority of modern his-

[1] Vol. vi, March, 1927.

torians), will necessarily give an unduly favourable account of Alexander, may indeed be giving Alexander's own account of himself, such as he particularly desired the world to have and believe.

Before I discuss the significance of all this, I will make two observations. The first is, if Ptolemaeus, following the Journals, gives even in one instance (on the Hyphasis) a false number of Alexander's infantry in a critical battle, does not that at least suggest that the Journal was not above falsification?

The second observation has to do with one of (probably the chief of) the Official History-writers. Callisthenes, a philosopher, was taken along with the expedition as the official writer, or one of the writers. Now Callisthenes writes laudatory accounts of Alexander, but was put to death for verbal statements of quite the other kind. The only answer which seems to suggest itself is that Callisthenes was an honest man, and a man who thought deeply; and though not above grinding the axe of his own city (he himself mooted Alexander's divinity at Bactra, in hopes of kind treatment for Olynthus) and certainly holding an exaggerated opinion of himself, had clear notions about consistency. For this plainness he died. Now Callisthenes must all along have been conscious of the trend of things. He must all along have had that tinge of real honesty for which he died. The only theory which seems

possible (and theory, or guess, is all that is left to us) is that the Callisthenes who spoke out loud and bold was the real Callisthenes; and that the historian Callisthenes was writing to order and under supervision. The ridiculous passage in his History about the waves at Mount Climax retiring before the son of Zeus (the sea did, in fact, conveniently recede), a bit of flattery worthy of the Court of Canute, was probably inserted, by order, to prepare for that very deification which the true Callisthenes – whose tongue, at least, was unfettered and unsupervised – nobly resisted.

Here then we have two conclusions of high importance – though not indeed new conclusions; the one is that the Official History was from the outset 'Press,' or propaganda; and the other is that this propaganda was for consumption in Greece, and especially Macedon. Callisthenes took up a task which he liked less and less as he went on; he sent his duly certified copies to Macedon, and could not recall them; and these, in fragments, we now have; and, strangest irony of fate, these formed the basis of the wildest romantic glorification of Alexander, Callisthenes' murderer. Yet the fire burned within him, and at the last he spoke with his tongue. But why all this elaborate arrangement as to propaganda? Why all this spreading, in Greece and Macedon, of such extravagant tales? Why, as Alexander got

farther and farther away, must he become not less and less, but greater and greater, before the eyes of his countrymen? There seems but one answer: Alexander's face, and his heart, were set Eastward, but he left an unsettled West behind him. He could not for a moment dream of letting the West look after itself; that might mean alliance with Persia, a powerful fleet cutting his communications, and, worst of all, disloyalty perhaps even in Macedon, which would mean no more money and no more troops. True, Alexander soon got independent of money, but not till he was back at Babylon could he even begin to feel independent as far as troops went. Macedon had to supply all such needs, during his expedition, as he could not supply on the spot. He must therefore keep Greece and Macedon well in hand; and an elaborate propaganda was arranged and carried on, which startles us by its modernity, but is the more intelligible. The minimizing of the number of infantry used against Porus, if it goes back to the official records – either the Day-Book, or the historian who succeeded Callisthenes – is another such advertisement. We can almost see the poster in the Macedonian villages – 'Come and Join! Easy victories and rich spoil!'

All this shakes our faith in the Official History. But how much preliminary 'faking' was done in the Journals? We shall never know. I give, however,

one instance which may suggest an answer. Alexander's chivalrous attitude towards the Persian queens and princesses, well attested, was certainly well advertised. But why? Because at this stage Alexander was a Macedonian of the Macedonians; there would have been trouble, if he had at once allied himself with a Persian princess. But later, when he had taken these ladies on long and trying journeys – one of them at length dropping with exhaustion [1] – he married, with much pomp, one of Dareius' daughters (Barsine-Stateira) and perhaps Parysatis, daughter of Ochus, also, being already married to the daughter of a Bactrian chieftain![2] It is in the light of this that we can understand Parmenio's advice (after the capture of Damascus) about Barsine, widow of Memnon; in fact one can hear the old marshal saying, 'Sir, if you must marry in Persia, here is your chance; a lady of noble if not of the royal line, half-Greek by birth, and so Greek by education and connections that the army will stand the marriage admirably.' But Alexander if the story is correct – and so I think it is – did not even so, dare to proclaim Barsine, widow of Memnon, his actual queen. It was only much later (Barsine being left behind; we find her and her son,

[1] They were left at Susa; Dareius' queen died near the Tigris.

[2] How the marriage with Roxane was politic, as some writers state, I find it hard to see. The Macedonians did not like it.

later, at Pergamum) after the bold experiment of a love-match with a chief's daughter, who rapidly sinks into the background, that Alexander in open court, and amid similar merry-makings of many of his officers and men, weds a Persian royal bride. But, after Issus, full value must be got from Alexander's most sober and certainly chivalrous, if also politic, attitude towards Dareius' ladies.

Thus we come back to this paraphernalia of official historians, propaganda-history, honest men turned pamphleteers, and (we must say it) possibly 'faked' official records. The 'real' Alexander, indeed, recedes from us the more, the more we inquire.

So far then we have advanced; the contemporary picture, and many of the later pictures, of Alexander, must certainly arise from sketches favourable to Alexander, but favourable to Alexander at the moment made. As things progress, the picture changes, never continuing in one stay, and thus we get that inconsistent Alexander whom history, and certainly biography must recognize – the Alexander who *did* practise self-mastery, certainly when in the field, but did murder Cleitus in a drunken frenzy; who would not look at a Persian princess, but does fall in love with a 'princess of Bactria,' and finally marries at least one Persian princess also; who despises Orientals (as a true pupil of Aristotle) and often shows his contempt, but at length sets them

almost level with his Macedonian officers; who gives democratic government to Asia Minor, and later is absolute despot in Asia Minor; who mastered every army opposed to him save one – his own; who encourages Persian troops, but takes care, after some troublesome experience, to have Macedonian satraps; who accepts the flattery of Anaxarchus, that the King can do no wrong, and the ritual-reply of the priests of Ammon that he is son of Zeus, and yet is tortured towards the end of his short life that he has done grievous wrong to his own brother-divinity Dionysus!

Are we going to get any consistent picture here? I do not propose to attempt it: and the less so, since the purpose of this essay in biography is to try to show that not the 'real' (and unattainable) Alexander, but the Alexander as different types and different ages saw him, is our true interest.

Before we can get any clear idea of the ways in which Alexander was regarded, whether by his contemporaries or those that followed after, we must get as clear an idea as possible of the meaning, to the Greeks, of history, philosophy, politics. Each of these branches would require a volume to itself, if considered in detail. Here only a short and quite general sketch can be attempted; and much will have been said when it has been stated once for all that we must shake off nearly the whole of the modern

connotation of these words when we apply them to Greek thought.

History meant different things to different historians. To Herodotus it was epic, to Thucydides tragedy, to Xenophon romance, to Livy, panegyric. Later, it is true, the chronicler or annalist comes into his own; but even then we do not get anything approaching to the modern scientific history, which after much weighing of facts and balancing of contradictions evolves a cold and precise narrative leading to occasional summaries of situation and character. Again, one object of much modern history seems to be to use the past to prognosticate the future – a very doubtful and dangerous business. The ancient historians were not proof against this lure; but they did not write history for that purpose. They would write it, as sculptors wrought it in stone, as a monument of achievement; but they also wrote it to show the workings, among mankind, of great mysterious powers, of Gods, of Fate, of Fortune, of Persuasion, of Vengeance. And they wrote it, as sculptors wrought it, rather for the spectators than for the hero. They had grasped that in these world-dramas or world-films, it is the audience, or spectators, not the villain or hero, that is really interesting. Thus the ancient historian had a great and wonderful work to perform. His sweep was too wide, his aim too lofty, too Miltonic, to permit long footnotes on

the exact position of this place or that, or on the precise movements of such an hour on such a day. These things were for the clerks, the journalists; they might have their value. But the worship of the ascertained fact, and the equation of fact with fact, as if they are all of equal value in virtue of their ascertainment, which we so often meet to-day, were far from the ancient mind. From this it follows that the ancient historian, so far from sinking his own personality when he begins to discuss other personalities, gloried in it. I do not think – as I have said already – that this involved deliberate fact-'faking.' Of this there may have been a certain amount; but for the most part we get sincere expressions of conviction, and pictures sincerely coloured by convictions, of reasonably honest men. Only we must again remember that they were also uncritical men, in our modern sense; and very dependent upon their materials; so that what we think the historian's view may merely be his uncritical acceptance of someone else's view. Thus Arrian, with a show of criticism, yet takes over almost *in toto* Ptolemaeus' history, known to be based on the official chronicle. Thus Plutarch, also with a show of criticism, takes over whatever makes a brilliant picture – and looking at his picture, who shall blame him? Well, then, we shall expect to find ancient historians take strong views, even if one could not always express them.

They know next to nothing of the balancing of facts.

Ancient philosophy is divided from modern philosophy in that it was chiefly exoteric, and always intensely practical. Both Socrates and Plato make that clear. We associate philosophy to-day with distant professors who now and then write very abstruse books; the ordinary person 'doesn't see the use of it all,' and as for the man in the bar-parlour, whom I take to be the equivalent of Socrates' man in the market-place, he has not even heard if there be such a study.

To the Greek, his philosophy was his creed, because his philosophy spelt to him the only true road to the happiness, not necessarily of himself, but of man. That happiness could be obtained – and why ever not obtain it? Naturally enough, if such a one as Alexander came into the world's arena and seemed to wreck that true road to happiness of Man by his own love of aggrandizement, the philosophers, like the historians, would feel aggrieved and embittered, as Aristotle himself was embittered with his own pupil. But it was all a matter of honest conviction. If they asked, 'Has Alexander helped on the world?' and if they felt 'No,' they said 'No.' Some modern writers speak as if the philosophers who condemned Alexander had no higher motive than spite.

As for politics – if they were not so lofty as philosophy, which went beyond the fiery walls of the world, yet they did teach people how to live together in unity. It did matter, therefore, intensely, under what sort of *polis* you lived. Where (in matters of politics) we talk, the Greek felt. Small wonder, again, if Alexander had to run the gauntlet of politicians as well as historians and philosophers; if he who loomed so large, who drove so forcibly, upon the world's surface, had to pay the ordinary penalties of the limelight.

So far, then, by way of introduction. As we go through the various Alexander pictures which succeed one another almost from Issus onward, let us be clear about two things; one, that these speakers and writers felt deeply (witness Demosthenes), and the other, that the unfavourable view of Alexander comes, on the whole, from those who did most serious thinking.

First, it becomes clear, though this may seem obvious enough, that all views of Alexander date from his own time. This is not, however, necessary. One might have treated a historical character quite erroneously for centuries, owing to reliance on his contemporaries, who saw him obscurely through mists of controversy; and then, by the happy discovery of some crucial document, the verdict of history might be reversed, and a palinode sung. It

is not so with Alexander. Even the extravagances of the Alexander romance have their roots in his own times.

The early historians of Alexander were really unworthy. He wanted an epic poet to sing him, and he would have made a good epic subject. But till the so-called epics of the Romances, Alexander hardly appears at all in poetry. There were not wanting attempts; either there has been a confusion of names, or a mysterious poetic Arrian tried his hand. It is well for Alexander and for us that nothing of these would-be epics have survived. The early prose historians, as we have seen, were either copiers of the official Day-Books and the official propaganda, or semi-official embroiderers like Callisthenes, the problem of whose History I have discussed above.

Perhaps the chief idea we get from the early historians is that which Hogarth so wisely emphasizes, Alexander's isolation. He certainly went in for what, on the sea, is called 'one-man navigation,' and has made many wrecks. This we can learn also from the confusion which reigned after his death. Aleaxnder may have kept up the pretence of doing things in Macedonian fashion; he seems to have dropped the Macedonian Privy Council, and after Parmenio's death he had perhaps no reliable adviser at all. The other view is, as we all know, the (quite true) view of Alexander as the

unbeaten Conqueror. This view it was which appealed so strongly to the man in the street. One may ask why; why does the market-place always dearly love a bloody conqueror? Possibly through that strange way we have of identifying ourselves with ('projecting ourselves into') the hero of the moment. We climb the cliff with Wolfe, we cross the Alps with Hannibal. Anyhow, this view of Alexander as the hewer down of all opposition grew very dear to the hearts of peaceful people; and this view, in the Romances, reaches swashbuckling dimensions. With Aristobulus first begins, it seems, in writing, the other view so attractive to the multitude, that of the Pioneer-Explorer. There is not so much difference after all between the market-place crowds, anxious to hear what Alexander had last been up to, and the modern crowd in arm-chairs and wearing ear-phones eagerly awaiting news of some intrepid airman. But through Aristobulus, so far as we can make out from his fragments, and from Arrian, shines out one further idea, that the King's heart was inscrutable; that Alexander's plans and motives were beyond the fathoming of ordinary mankind. It is in this, perhaps, that we find the origin both of future deification and of that view which represented Alexander as carried forward by Fate or Fortune, hardly, perhaps, himself knowing whither.

Cleitarchus merely pandered to the popular

desires, and gave them, as a modern journalist does, what they wanted to hear. With the official history as a basis (which almost certainly omitted much that might have been to Alexander's discredit, and gave motives that were to his credit; was, in fact, both anti-Parmenio and anti-Macedon, which rather suggests Parmenio as a likely rival to Alexander, and therefore suggests a direct motive for its compilation) Cleitarchus almost certainly embroiders, as Callisthenes and Onesicritus had already done.

In Cleitarchus the emphasis was laid rather on the uniqueness of Alexander and his work – and quite justly too. He is hailed as something not before seen on earth, as almost *sui generis*. One curious way of exalting Alexander is the exalting of Dareius and his army. Alexander, moreover, is compared with his own divine ancestry.

With all his determination to 'hew his way through,' Alexander kept a chivalrous side; and this is one of the most interesting sides of his picture. The public like a bloody conqueror; but they like him chivalrous, and it is to the credit of the Greeks of Alexander's day, and to their earlier teachers, that they did want that side of Alexander's character emphasized, as Shakespeare makes Henry V into the chivalrous knightly king. That Hellenism meant in some sense Humanism and Chivalry was of incalculable value to the world.

One way in which Cleitarchus assisted the official history was by relieving Alexander of responsibility for the treatment of Thebes, and by regarding the murder of Cleitus as a 'disaster' to Alexander sent upon him by the wrath of Dionysus. This murder was evidently a grievous stumbling-block even to the most devoted followers of Alexander, and had to be excused as best it might.

All, however, did not see Alexander and his work in so favourable a light. The school of Aristotle (of which I speak presently) took a strong hostile view, and this no doubt affected historians too. Macedon was not a home of historians as yet; and Alexander had managed to prevent the smouldering fires of Macedonian hostility bursting into conflagration. The Greeks, however, still spoke with a free voice; and though no great historian arose among these, there were not wanting minor writers (Ephippus, Polycleitus, Timaeus) to discredit Alexander, rather perhaps by scandal-mongering than by any serious historical studies. This is much to be regretted, but was (as one of them confesses) a natural reaction against the *couleurs de rose* of Callisthenes. But if Alexander found as yet no serious historian, he did not escape the attentions of the rhetorical schools of which Juvenal speaks later in his famous passage on Hannibal:—

Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias.

The question most often debated was whether Alexander owed his success more to personal merit or to fortune,[1] and though these rhetorical debates were no more than debates, they kept the minds of all students of rhetoric busy, right into late Roman times, with the problems of Alexander's career. I shall not pursue the subject thither; but it is noticeable that when Rome came eastward to conquer Greece, these declamations, so far as they were favourable to Alexander, lay ready to the hands of those who set up Alexander as the great national hero of Greece against Rome; and echoes of them meet us both in Livy and perhaps Vergil.[2] As far as they were unfavourable to Alexander, they gave Rome an answer to Greece; and in this shape they probably helped to mould Curtius' history.

But it is among the philosophers that we shall find more serious views of Alexander's work and character; and naturally, since Alexander appeared on the screen of History either as a fulfilment or as a negation of their dearest principles and hopes.

In what we have left of Aristotle, Alexander does not appear [3] – and possibly Aristotle did not care to

[1] The popular mind seemed to prefer Alexander as a 'child of fortune,' to Alexander reaping due fruits of his own greatness.

[2] *Aen.*, vi, 799 ff.

[3] Aristotle's letter to Alexander, which certainly gives an Aristotelian view, is discussed later on.

risk mention of him, even after his death. But it is clear that Alexander's work was the very antithesis of Aristotle's view that the Greeks were so far above the Orientals that no fusion should be attempted; conquest, if you will. At first, Alexander appeared to be carrying out Aristotle's principles; but when he broke down the partition wall between Greek and Oriental, and himself became Orientalized, Aristotle must indeed have wrung his hands. Certain it is that Aristotle's followers regarded Alexander as a world-danger; and a focus was given to their opposition by the murder, judicial or not, of Callisthenes. There are few senses so keen as that of disappointment; and Callisthenes' rally to the principles of his uncle and philosophic master may have been under the bitter constraint of disillusionment. Rightly or wrongly, Callisthenes was regarded as a martyr to his Peripatetic principles, to which he had (up to then) perhaps been regarded as something of a traitor. At any rate we know what happened; and the anger of Aristotelians was justified.

Besides this, the Aristotelians held fast to the great foundation principle of Greek ethics, 'Nothing overmuch,' of which Aristotle's own view that vice is either extreme, between which virtue lies as the mean, was a logical outcome. Now Alexander had 'gone to extremes,' extremes of anger, anyhow, of self-indulgence, perhaps, of pride and self-confidence,

certainly, as this very 'adoration' business proved. All this must have worked 'like madness in the brain' to those who hoped that Alexander, pupil of Aristotle, was going to be Plato's 'philosophic king.' In fact all Plato's political work, and all Aristotle's development of it, seemed to come toppling down like a child's card-house.

When we speak of the Cynics, we are apt to think of disagreeable self-satisfied persons with a turn for Johnsonian epigram. Their nickname is unfortunate. They cherished, in opposition to the Aristotelians, a wide and honourable desire for internationalism. The Cynics held that 'a man's a man for a' that,' that geographical accidents of birth should not count, that men of different races should live in unity together, and that the best government under which they could do so was a monarchy. And here was Alexander, a monarch, and busy internationalizing as fast as he could. What more could the most cynical Cynic desire? The Cynics were indeed Monarchists; but they had exalted views, and tenacious views, of what sort their monarch should be. For the Cynics were sternly ethical. The value in a man is not his mere humanity, but his virtue. Let him live the philosophic life of practical well-doing, and it mattered not what was his function in life, he was the equal of anyone. In fact the poor and the downtrodden had, in Cynicism, at least some

sort of gospel preached to them. But there was a corollary. The greatest king, be he unvirtuous, or even non-virtuous, was as no one. He was, indeed, the true slave; and those in power were so apt to give rein to their passions that too often they were slaves ready-made. In all this the Cynics anticipated the Stoics.

Now how did Alexander, the whirlwind conqueror, fit into this scheme? Only as a might-have-been; only as a sad example of one who could have been the true monarch, could have brought about the true internationalism, could have exhibited the true virtues. Cynicism wanted to conquer the world; Alexander wanted to conquer the world; it might have been together, it was apart. Just because Alexander so nearly approached the Cynic ideal, was the disappointment the greater.[1] There was something akin to Cynicism in the philosophy of the Brahmans with whom Alexander conversed. Possibly Cynic influence is to be seen in the exaltation of the principles of these very sternly-principled men as against the unphilosophic if partly sym-

[1] Onesicritus wrote in praise of Alexander, but was not, so far as we can judge, a confirmed Cynic, though he had attended the lectures of Diogenes. He does praise Alexander's 'internationalizing,' his spreading of Hellenism. But he does not seem to have grasped the more serious side of Cynicism, and that was the rock on which Alexander's reputation was wrecked.

pathetic attitude of Alexander's mind. Perhaps also there was some later 'writing-up' of Alexander's meeting with Diogenes of Corinth, where Diogenes, if 'cynical' in the popular sense, at least stood his ground nobly and 'scored' all along the line. Ultimately, in fact, Alexander became to Cynicism exactly the last thing Cynicism had desired, the type of the prosperous materialist, the 'ungodly' of so many of the Hebrew Psalms.

Stoicism took over the Cynic cosmopolitanism and the Cynic conviction that the Philosopher is all in all, and philosophy all in all. This was no fanciful notion; it meant merely the supremacy of the mind (though the Stoic knew something approaching also to soul) which is to us a kingdom, and which can make a hell of heaven, a heaven of hell. Thus far the Stoic is the strongest possible anti-materialist, the strongest 'mentalist,' if not yet spiritualist. This side of Stoicism we have seen that Alexander did not fit.

But there was a development of the Cynic cosmopolitanism with which Alexander might well have harmonized. This is the Stoic *κοινὸς νόμος*, whereby the cosmopolitan dream might be realized. Here too Alexander was so near, and yet so far; here too he was but a melancholy might-have-been. The Stoic view would no doubt have been practically Grote's view, that Alexander indeed hewed a way

for Greek civilization and culture, but that his methods of blending East with West were unphilosophic to the last degree,[1] inasmuch as they centred far too much in his own person, and were indeed dictated not by one great and wise principle, but by the opportunism which even the greatest conqueror must employ when conquering far from his base.

If there is one thing more than another that we should desire, it is a portrait of Alexander, in the middle, or at the end, of his career, by Aristotle. Perhaps we have one – and in that 'perhaps' lies much tantalizing.

There is extant, in Arabic, a letter of Aristotle to Alexander, which is certainly very Aristotelian, and must almost certainly be by a disciple of Aristotle, that is, one of the Peripatetics. But it does not breathe the wrath inspired among the Peripatetics by the death of Callisthenes; and if written after the death of Callisthenes would seem inevitably to have been bound to mention it. Moreover, the genuineness of the letter, even if perhaps 'worked over,' – as so many genuine originals were worked over, in days when there were no strict ideas of literary *meums* and *tuums* – seems supported by two considerations which have often had weight in discussions of docu-

[1] Eratosthenes is an apparent exception; but he writes rather as a man of the world than a convinced philosopher.

mental genuineness, the 'nature of the case,' and the presence of 'undesigned coincidences.' The letter fits admirably the period between the deaths of Philotas and Parmenio (in 330), and of Cleitus (in 328), and the death of Callisthenes (in 327); a period not altogether likely to have been chosen by a literary forger. Furthermore, the letter very much suggests what Aristotle might have written on receiving a letter from his nephew Callisthenes himself, full of gloomy forebodings. The main portion of the letter is in general terms; it reads like an extract from Machiavelli's *Discorsi sopra Tito Livio* or like some brief draft for his *Principe*; counsels from a philosopher to one rather suddenly raised from great power to very much greater; and, in fine, if it be not Aristotle's, is an early, and most precise representation of what Aristotle might very well have written at that particular time, when he was shocked by news which seemed to suggest that Alexander was passing at one stride from power to tyranny, and was about to turn his back on Aristotle's own teaching, that Greeks were to remain Greeks, and Persians Persians; that in fact East was East and West was West.

There we must leave the question of the letter's genuineness. But in any case it represents an early portrait of Alexander just at the critical time of his transformation from the chrysalis of Macedonian

royalty to the gorgeous colourings of Persian imperialism.

The letter is worth translating in full; but I give here only the salient passages:

'My breath has almost been taken away by the unbroken series of your exploits; they have indeed become second nature to us, not some new nine days' wonder; and we have not even time for rejoicing over your successes, especially when we dwell on the immensity of your good fortune, for you are truly one of whom people say, "Who praises you, cannot lie." I had a letter telling me that after your illness at Babylon (*or* Arbela), your victories over Dareius and his army, the dangers of the wars you waged, and the toils you endured, you were devoting your attention to other matters, suitable to your new advancement; but you must allow space for contemplation of what makes for sound politics, especially of legislation; for this is a praiseworthy object of your study, which should exercise your thoughts, and will bring you great fame. You know full well how much Lycurgus achieved by the constitution of his state (of Sparta); but your fame will be greater, as your kingdom and the number of your cities is greater, than his who only had a single city. You will have undying glory and splendour, since laws are the safeguard of a people, the assurance

of security, and the bond of peace among subjects. Many have thought that a legislator is superfluous, save in time of war; that after war is over, and times of piping peace have dawned, one could dispense with him. This they imagine, because they fancy that to make use of prosperity comes easily to every one, but that only one here and there can bear up against times of stress. I do not agree; I incline to the other view, since men under distress become sober, and long for what is truly salutary; when terrors assail, they long for what may keep them at bay; but when all goes well, they take to wrong-doing and cast off the bridle of prudence. You will then find nothing harder than for caution to obtain when things are easy and lax; whereas again and again in prosperity prudence is thrown to the winds. In times of prosperity, then, laws are a prime necessity. During wars, there are chances and changes, and these make people prudent. But much also happens in peace; yet then people are careless and thoughtless. In peace, then, education and legislation are needed. . . . A city needs, first, good laws, and next, a leader to ordain them and to lead the people to appreciate them – the evil by fear, the good by honourable feelings. But how can one have a general law without a general leader? Who can bring men together, and to good estate, save one of great power, and outstanding authority in some great

city, so that he may be the prop of the laws and the bond of fellowship? For such a one can make good habits to thrive in a city, and evil ones to decay; nor can any state flourish save by the excellence of its leaders and directors. Such a man must be wise and honest, pre-eminent not only for energy, justice, and personal character, but also in power and all warlike appliances, so that he may compel the people, and make them law-abiding. For many peoples will not obey justice nor follow equity. If these have no fear, they turn to follies, and even to the breaking down of laws. Wherefore in this circumstance especially is there need of a lawful sovereign, who may weld into one the state; even as are those, especially Greek states, so closely united as to form a single realm. Only from good leaders and directors do good states arise, as we have seen in Sparta and Athens; for in the one kings ruled and gave laws, in the other archons. Thus these states were built up and thus they became famous. On the other hand, it is from bad government of leaders and directors that have arisen the evil and corruption which have prevailed in states, if their leaders have spent themselves on empty pleasures and have cared not for the governing of the state, from which alone comes glory and everlasting fame.

'The ruler must not regard his subjects as so much wealth and sustenance and flocks, but as his own

folk, and as his friends; nor must he pursue dignities hated by his people, but that to which he has won his way by good government and noble deeds; he must have the union of two things, greatest in potency, strongest in influence, that is, his people's love and his people's admiration. (This thought is elaborated.) These two qualities I hope that you have; and I speak not to one who has reached a height he does not deserve. . . .

'Let it not make you angry with your subjects if you find that some of these vie with you in your laudable pursuits, or desire to equal you in influence, so long as there be no open disloyalty. The passions of the people are of no account to you; but those who vie with you are of the highest nobility, and their thoughts and aspirations press on to this object, the more so since they have already hazarded a noble attempt.' (These obscure words seem to point to the Philotas and Parmenio episode.)

'I know well that your character is a blend of justice and pride, mercy and severity, and claims the respect of all men; but so chiefly, if they have regard for the success of your government and the happy issue of your achievements; for their hope is firmly planted in the continuance of your reign and in the peace of the world beneath your sway. Besides, I am aware that you reject the evil doings of tale-bearers, and have no traffic with idle business; a

quality which is valuable not only to your people as a whole, but especially to your best and wisest followers. Moreover my judgment on you is that you love honour, especially if strong and brave men honour you; and that you desire to deserve it not through fear but through regard; and deserve it you will, if you advance those who honour you, respect you, and value your intimacy. But the inquiring into everything which comes to you, the investigation of every case that presents itself, till you can decide what is and what is not worthy of you, are indeed unworthy of your sovereignty; for in so doing you cannot keep tale-bearers at a distance. Rather you will do so, if you take note of whosoever you perceive to be given to this tale-bearing, and punish him with severity, so that those like him may be warned, and others deterred from doing the like.[1]

'Your constant attacks on the Persians appear to me suited to keep peace and to eternalize your fame; for it is right that you should do as you are done by.' (The argument proceeds, that victories must be followed up by a careful constitution of the new-won empire.)

'I hold that any full act requires the preparation which leads up to it and the execution which achieves it. The first you have completed; since beyond your

[1] This rather obscure passage might well mean, 'Do not believe all you hear against Callisthenes.'

paternal inheritance you have acquired vast fame, vast territory, and a splendour and a name such as none other has had before you. There remains the due completion of what you have achieved, and the proper ordinance thereof. We hope that this you will perform, both by your love of high-mindedness, your ambition for glory, and the development of those good qualities which you have always had. I know indeed that your spirit yearns for battles and raids . . . but remember the harm which may blot this success, by some change of luck, or by ordinary disasters; and think of this, for your own sake, and for that of your new conquests. . . .

'Make two things your aim, justice and mercy. For these contradictories alone can establish securely your sovereignty.

'Many people will not obey except under stress of fear; to such you must show severity; but good citizens obey from reverence and affection; towards them show understanding and kindness; and thus the two props of your rule will be obedience and constraint. . . . Free men should be exempt from severity, unless they attack and attempt to remove their king. But if you shall crush a rebellion, with the apparatus of war put aside the apparatus of violence;[1] the rebels were your foes; now they are foes no more; and so mercy must now supplant

[1] This seems to deprecate the practice of torture.

violence, and lenience severity. . . . Moreover a king must know the limits of wrath, so that his anger be not hard and rough, nor again weak and feeble; the one is a mark of beasts of prey, the other, of babes.

'Nor am I fully confident that if you accept advice you may not suffer the same fate, as do others. For many men when their advice is asked, do not give that advice which really helps him who asks it, but that which assists their own interests. I urge you to listen to his advice, who says, "Any good deed is always better than any bad deed." Give diligence then to render to all men their due. For justice is commended and highly prized not only among all philosophers but also even among fools. Things in themselves evil may be checked by good remedies, but also by evil ones. Yet the other way is better; to check one evil by another is difficult; to check evil by good is an act of goodness. Remember also the story of the man to whom another gave some advice, saying, "Were I you, I should get rid of that man"; the reply was, "But as I am not you, I will not."[1] . . . Make it your aim therefore to win a good and undying repute; and know that where states have become weak and corrupt, this has been by reason of evil rulers, men who have set the

[1] This logical play was clearly a rhetorical commonplace. It is attributed, in a well-known context, to Alexander.

acquisition of riches above the care of the state, have turned all their thoughts to the swifter satisfying of their lusts, and have neglected the due government of the state; evils whose trace remains ineradicable. I trust that your work may have a happy issue; that you will devote yourself to the building up of that character which the Greeks approve, the more so, as this best agrees with your own nature. Be therefore zealous, and win an unfading fame, by the affection you lay up in the hearts of men, by which the memory of your deeds will be kept green, and your efforts receive for ever that praise which they deserve; along with reverence for your memory, and much good success from your present rule. Farewell.'

This letter, Aristotle's or not, whether wholly or in part, at least gives an admirable sketch, by implication, of Alexander as he seems, from the available evidence, to have been just at that critical moment of his career when he definitely inclined to drop the Macedonian and assume the Cosmopolitan, or at least the Eastern.

One cannot but suspect that if the letter were a rhetorical effort written after the event, it would take a stronger and more retrospective line.

It would be interesting, but not altogether to our purpose, to pursue the Alexander idea in Roman

literature, especially in the pages of Seneca and Lucan, biting pages as they were. But this embittered picture of Alexander is definitely inspired by hatred of a tyranny only too near at hand. To admirers of the great Julius and to Augustus the picture of Alexander came most appropriately; it was the picture of the chivalrous conqueror bringing in the train of war the cornucopia of peace.

If then someone asks – which of all these pictures is the real Alexander? The answer will be first, that it does not really matter, and secondly, that Alexander was all and none of them; but that the serious judgment of the contemporary and near-contemporary philosophic schools must be weighed against those historians who are clearly influenced by 'official' documents, that is, by representations of Alexander which emanated from Alexander's immediate circle.

Alexander was all and none of these pictures because he never stayed still long enough to be any one of them; and because he passed rapidly from one moment into another. Here we have him, in a drunken fury, slaughtering his friend, and there we have him, almost maudlin in his penitence; here we have him storming impossible heights, himself the very soul of incredible valour; there, indulging in a grief for Hephaestion which, sincere no doubt in its beginning, lapsed into weak theatricalities – all

contradictions and antinomies from start to finish. No; Alexander never was the static Alexander whom we see in the neat summaries of the historians; he was and is an idea, a force, rushing like a cyclone over Asia; we see him only in motion; and even in death he still stalks the stage of history, and the spectators, still projecting themselves into the hero, and absorbing the hero into themselves,[1] see him now a mirror of knighthood, now a ferocious unchained beast, now a *felix praedo*, now a Greek of the Greeks, now a Persian of the Persians, and now the very negation of those loftiest philosophic ideals in which he had actually been trained.

Again and again in picture galleries we are brought face to face with those solemn pictures of the Last Judgment, where an Archangel weighs souls in a balance; on right and left the souls depart to bliss or woe. History has, indeed, her 'psychostasia,' her weighing of souls, but she has no Last Judgment. And, after all, this pictured weighing of souls is a simple thing; there are but the two classes,

[1] This idea is not fanciful. Let anyone study an audience at a melodrama; let anyone see a French audience watching a Nativity Pastoral, or a Jeanne d'Arc Mystery; or study the very difficult (and fragmentary) notes of Aristotle upon Tragedy – the more difficult because he is speaking of the tragic hero in terms of the spectator, and of the spectator in terms of the hero, just because he sees them utterly and completely blended – and he will see the justice of the above simile.

one which sinks the scale, one which kicks the beam, one good, one bad. By what standards are we to weigh our great men of history? By what meteyard may we measure them? Shall we say boldly that they are in no way great, who leave behind no positive legacy of human progress? Shall we be plainly Positivist, and cancel out our Napoleons, in that they are so many Apollyons, mere destroyers? And if so, who shall be final court of appeal, to tell us which destroys, and which builds? The maxim, *securus iudicat orbis terrarum* is often no more than a shift, to save the confession 'we cannot tell.' And how shall our heroes be weighed? In all their harness of war, or their stiff robes of state, or as the nurse weighed them in infancy, and as the Archangel in the picture weighs the anxious souls, all divested and bare? And if so well may we ask – *quot libras in duce summo?* For it is often the externals which count most, weigh most, not only in popular estimate, but in the cautious balancings of the historians. Glamour is glamour; gold and other things can glister. And if we are agreed, as we rightly should be, that the externals must go for nothing; that they are but the cart or wagon whose tare must be deducted; even so, how can we weigh what will not wait to be weighed? For our hero of history, stripped and bare, is no patient soul ready to climb into the scales of destiny, but a volatile chemical force, a genie loose from the

jar, an energy, a fostering breeze, or a rushing mighty wind. Too much, far too much, do our historians, biographers, memoir-writers, trust to the poor externals. Too often do they relate, or retain, the worthless kind of gossip, the useless little scraps of fact that do not really help, or the stereotyped judgment, that has made a phase into a characteristic. Perhaps the only safe way to estimate the great is, after all, to turn away from themselves to study their repercussions on their contemporaries and upon those that come after; to approach them from the utmost circumference of their influence; to work slowly downwards to the centre point, and find even there not a concrete human being, of a certain age, and height, and taste in food and clothes, but a solitary mind or spirit, radiant and focus at one and the same time, to be measured both by the intensity of the focal warmth and by the size of the radiated circle. And on the way from circumference to centre we shall indeed, and must, pass through the rather misty atmosphere of popular impression; and we shall reach our central figure, having learnt not so much what he did, and what he said, as what the popular mind felt sure he ought, or might, have said and done. Thus only do we get a clue to the most difficult part of our task, the estimating of our central hero not in himself but in his relations, interrelations, influences, inter-influences, with and upon the rest

of mankind. What historical psychologist is equal to all this? And when shall we have such a science, such a study – dimly adumbrated in the suggestion of General Smuts (in *Holism*) for a new study of 'personology'? When that study – of which the present work attempts to be a suggestion and no more – develops, we shall get nearer to the heart of things; but always there will remain – and therein lies the romance of history – the unattainable, the elusive, the mysterious.

No; the interest of Alexander lies not in our being able to catalogue his vices and virtues, and weigh him in some archangelic balance, but rather in the very impossibility of this. It lies in the rightful conception of Alexander as a 'subject-object' both of contemporary ideas and of 'historic' apperceptions. We want to see him as he was seen. In the biography of one known hero of history we have the inner biographies of a great company of unknown witnesses, and in some part indeed our own also.

The literary portraits of Alexander are partly idealizations and partly realism, or even perhaps caricature. The actual portraits, in sculpture, are all, or probably all, idealizations. We have nothing that certainly represents Lysippus' work; but we learn that he laid stress on the droop of the head towards the left shoulder, and the 'liquid' look of the eyes. We have portraits of Alexander as Hercules, as

Apollo, possibly as Zeus; one would like to think that some of the 'Young Ammon' coinage of and after his period represents Alexander under the guise of the young horned Ammon.[1]

In Poulsen's *Greek and Roman Portraits in English Country Houses* are two representations of Alexander; one (Rossie Priory) of Alexander 'heroized' in the character of Apollo; there is the slight inclination of the head, suggesting Lysippus' influence, and the eyes are 'pathetic'; the mouth being distinctly weak (and therein unlike that of the British Museum head); altogether a pleasing but weak face, regarded by Lord Kinnaird not quite unnaturally as a Diana. At Wilton House is a full-sized statue – almost unique – with no marked inclination of the head, and with features which do not suggest over-idealization. The head is indeed heavy, almost sensuous, and the mouth weak; but that the statue is of a heroized Alexander is clear from the pose, the arrangement of the hair as a corona, and the presence of a cornucopia. All we can say definitely as to plastic portraiture of Alexander is that it tends quite clearly towards idealization, of which the better known busts are striking examples.

[1] Actually, there is no visible difference between the earlier and the contemporary heads of the young Ammon.

CHAPTER XI

THE ROMANCE

As we study the development of the Alexander idea in later biographers and in the Romance, we are really making a study in idealization. Apart from the very weighty views of the philosophers, who felt, quite sincerely, that Alexander had a unique opportunity to take the higher road, but took the lower, the tendency is, all along, to idealize the hero, just because he was an outstanding figure. Here is something very creditable to the human spirit. As man, in times of bitter civil strife, finds a base motive for everything, depreciates every virtue, calls courage rashness, and rashness, greed, so, by the fireside, or in the cloister, or monastery library, did chronicler after chronicler, poetaster after poetaster, soften down the hard lines of Alexander, and give to him for furious wrath, courageous impetuosity, for overlove of wine, good fellowship, for the ironshod lust of conquest, a healthy and sportsmanlike spirit of adventure. Popular tradition has its villains, and likes them black; but its general tendency is without doubt charitable, and Dante, who in many ways follows popular imagination, while placing many of his nearer contemporaries in torment, sets many a historical character, whom history might place elsewhere, on the way to paradise.

All this legendary-treatment needs a special and comprehensive study. In fact, at the present time, the tendency is rather for the stern historian to rub off with his acid solvents the kindly whitewash of legend. Let this indeed be done; but let psychology also treat more seriously this idealizing tendency and see if it does not tell us something very illuminating about the human spirit. It is worth reflecting that the tendency is most marked among the least critical, that is, where man is working on his subconsciousness, rather than among the more thoughtful, like the philosophers, whose hostility cannot be merely revenge for the murder of Callisthenes, one of their number. One may speak of their 'anti-Alexander' verdict; but we ought not to speak, as many historians do, of an 'anti-Alexander' tradition.

The passage of History into Legend is merely the passage of the historical imagination from the area or sphere of the provable to the area or sphere of the unproven or unprovable. If History is the working of the human spirit upon certain outstanding objects (or 'subject-objects'), that working will go on as long as the object remains outstanding. By our proper and necessary logical rules we are able as a rule to draw a line between what we call fact and what we call fiction, though often the line is too tightly drawn. When the generations which knew have passed away,

generations which do not know still go on, giving play to their imagination, their ideas; and as there is no one near by to correct these, they create what we call fictions or legends. That is why legends usually arise separated both in place and time from their original object. Whenever we find 'legend' arising both in the same country in which their object lived and within a reasonable time of their object's disappearance, we must take these 'legends' very seriously and with no predisposition to call them false. But this happens comparatively rarely in history. Alexander is, in part, an example, and Jeanne d'Arc a better one. Small accretions to the story, odd fables and allegories to clothe in words truths difficult to express plainly, and curious errors of mere ignorance,[1] all go to make up the body of 'legend.'

In passing then from the Alexander story into the Alexander legend or romance, while we shall at once meet much that is clearly erroneous, we shall all

[1] At a performance of *Jeanne d'Arc* (Barbier and Gounod) recently in France, I found everything else extremely well done; scenery (mediæval castles, walls, etc.), costumes, and so on. But over the battlements of Orleans, to show it was in British occupation, floated a Union Jack. This is just what might occur to the French mind, after the Great War, and probably no one would think to question it. But this harmless little scenic error is a good example of strange little errors of fact and atmosphere which in time become attached to their objects and which no one thinks of questioning.

along have an underlying element of truth, and that is the popular estimate, constantly changing, indeed, in expression – at least till a sort of 'vulgate' is reached – of the hero. What is told of him will be the sort of thing people felt he could have done, might have done, ought to have done. Legend, as we have seen, arises out of the historical imagination, ranging unchecked and uncorrected – and, as Croce has taught us, whenever we think we are historians; romantic legend comes into being when we throw about the object of our imaginings the glamour of high purpose, lofty motive, and a certain aloofness and independence of ordinary human helps. To give an acceptable definition of Romance and Romantic is next to impossible. But in the sense in which we usually intend the words, Alexander was most clearly a Romantic Character, save for the apparent want of the love-motive, and that is not really an essential to romance as rightly understood, while it was easily supplied by those who desired it. Travel, adventure, invincibility, chivalrous sentiment, looked at through the sunset mists of the past, these make Romance, in its simple but adequate sense. Alexander was made for Romance. His brief career, his early death, his triumphant successes, and yet his obvious failure, his position as centre of the known world, and yet isolated in a Promethean loneliness – all this was good matter for Romance. And the accessories or

'accidents' of his career; his hell-cat mother, his quarrel with the King his father; his supposed divinity, his likeness in achievement to Dionysus, Heracles, and Achilles; his fevers, his wounds; the odd creatures he met, or must have met; the odd people he met, Amazons, perhaps, and Brahmans; the whole scenic setting: all these made of Alexander a character of Romance beyond the utmost invention even of a Sir Walter Scott. Popular imagination forgot, or almost forgot, massacres; forgot murders or judicial murders; forgot the 'toil and work but half-achieved,' and took Alexander to its heart as seldom – perhaps as never – it took any other.

For this is the essence of legendary Romance, it is popular. So far we have had only the 'official' historians, a Ptolemy, very correct, an Aristobulus, working in, here and there, a little foreign matter; a Callisthenes, writing panegyric according to plan; a Cleitarchus, giving rein to fancy; a Nearchus, soberly logging his daily runs, though not above such pleasant trifles as sea-ogresses, or schools of whales put to flight by trumpets and war-cries and charging triremes; an Arrian, blending the 'best' traditions – and so forth. Not that these writers were independent of 'popular' views and ideas. The general conception of their hero was based on popular estimates; and from the moment he became in any

sense a hero he was a focus for popular credibility, popular sentiment, and even, sometimes, popular depreciation.

But now we have the unchecked popular presentation, the most extravagant popular dressings-up, the strangest popular settings, for a hero who has now become cosmopolitan and of all time. No dull criteria of objective truth trouble these imaginative 'projectors.' Truth is not what they are pursuing; they describe their hero as their fancy sees him, and that is all. We shall never really grasp this odd medley and extravagant confusion of picturings until we have studied some mediæval cathedral or great church in detail, and have grasped something of the strange blendings of Pagan and Christian, Gothic and Renaissance, Flemish and Italian, whole-hearted sincerity and wild grotesque, which may be seen in the lesser reliefs and above all in the carvings of the choir-stalls. Do we deny value or truth to this strange but entrancing galaxy? What matter if one of the Foolish Virgins is dressed in a great Flemish hat, if Joseph of Arimathaea, side by side perhaps with a Cumaean Sybil, is clearly walking out of some Italian Banking-House, if Alexander himself appears armed cap-à-pie like a knight about to joust? And if the frieze above these curiously assorted companions is composed of such beasts as no traveller yet met, and no zoological gardens ever catalogued? It is just

this extravagance, this catholicity, for which we value a cathedral of Chartres or Auch, a church of Brou.

It is not my purpose, however, to trace the Alexander Romance into its mediaeval shapes. I hope readers may be stimulated to read the French romances, and the English poems (in the volumes of the Roxburgh or the Early English Text Societies, and elsewhere). I shall keep to the Greek romance which is the basis of them all (whether in its prose or its metrical form).

The history of the Romances can be briefly given.

Egypt is nearly always the source of the fantastic. Those who have attempted to outwatch the Bear with Thrice-great Hermes must have often found themselves nodding at what seems the sheer purposeless nonsense of a great deal of the Hermetic Corpus.[1] Greek literature is distinguished by its directness of purpose and its sanity; in a good deal of Egyptian literature, however deep the thought which may ultimately lie behind it, we are only studying grotesques. And thus it was in Egypt, and possibly, nay, probably, in the city of Alexander's own founding, that the fantasies which somehow fell together under the name of Callisthenes or Aisopus really arose. These fantasies were really often based on actual history, just as into the sober historians had already crept some element of fantasy; then, when

[1] Recently edited by the late Walter Scott (Oxford).

the collection had once begun, there clustered in, by a sort of natural gravitation, all sorts of fragments, or collections of fragments, of writing which dealt with Alexander from very varied view-points. It is almost as if, in one of the big libraries, such as that of Alexandria itself, someone had gone round the pigeon-holes or *plutei* and looking at the little labels which gave the short title of the roll within, had taken out and bound together into a bundle anything which bore the magic name, 'Alexander.'

What were these accretions? A great many fine set speeches, such as (in the writers' opinions) Alexander might have, or ought to have, delivered; these came largely from the Rhetorical Schools, where they had gained distinction as Prize exercises or 'Fair Copies'; they were floating about and could be had for the asking. The popular mind dearly loves a set speech, especially with a bit of rant; these, once incorporated, could not be let go. But then there were also Letters; and the popular mind, which still finds the writing of a letter a very elaborate and ceremonial process, and its reception rather eerie, not to say dangerous,[1] dearly loves a good letter, couched in good set terms. Then there were debates; and the popular mind loves a good debate, especially

[1] In rural Essex not very long ago the correct thing was to leave a letter on the mantelpiece, and not to open it, at least not for a season.

when they end, as literary debates may, with a knock-out blow. And as for the travellers' tales, the mere wonder and fairy element, they have always been dear, since Sindbad the Sailor and the Odyssey, and indeed long before that, to the folk-mind.

In this odd romantic patchwork, there is very little of what the Germans call mere 'tendency-writing.' Some indeed there is; but it is of a mild sort, and by no means of that calculated and deliberate type which is too often postulated. One quite pleasing feature of these popular romance-fragments is the way in which each nation claims Alexander as its own. Space, time, and even creed, mean nothing to these romancers. In Persia (whither the Alexander romance penetrated quite late in the seventh century) Alexander becomes a son of Dareius, while Egypt, getting first word in, had long ago claimed him as her own.

Every now and then there was a new version of 'recension.' In a time when all literature was everybody's property, anyone copying literature of this kind, for his own use, or for some library, would weld in anything of which he had knowledge but which did not appear in the original. A great part of these insertions, beyond the types I have already noted, might arise from collections of *Bons mots* or smart sayings, many of which would become assigned to Alexander just as University smart sayings are

assigned, in each generation, to the authority most reputed for uttering such sayings. Some of these are in Arrian; the well-known 'So would I, if I were Parmenio,' which finds a place in all the historians, is a very ancient type of epigram. Then, in the course of Alexander's adventures and travels, a tendency would naturally arise to insert some additional terror, or some familiar bogy, into the scenery of the background. Thus from the imaginations ordered or disordered of a large number of persons we get something like the curious but most instructive jumble of our late-Gothic Cathedral.

Egypt, as I have said, got in the first word, and spun a ridiculous fantasy of one King Nectanebus, who was the real father of Alexander. The story is absurd and indecent, but not without its touches of popular humour and even buffoonery; for the schoolboy Alexander when being instructed in astronomy by the star-gazing Nectanebus seizes the opportunity to push his tutor into a convenient pit with the words 'Blame yourself, mathematician! You do not know your mother earth; and yet you are gazing at the heavens!' (A gibe possibly reflecting the comedians' caricatures of Socrates.)

Through Latin translations, adaptations, and epitomes, the Egyptian-Greek collections acquired a wider field, and soon we find 'recensions' nearly everywhere; Alexander (in Ethiopia) becoming a

Christian apostle, with an Old Testament background; just as later on he becomes an ordinary knight-errant inspired with the highest principles of chivalry. French translations and metrical romances arising from them popularized the story in Middle-Age Europe. Eastward traces of it extend, it is said, to Malaya; but it did not arise in the East from Eastern recollections, being introduced from Egypt when Alexander's real history was almost forgotten. Thus the legend-romance fulfils the conditions already suggested for the development of legends, that they must be exotic.

In giving some account of the Romance in its early shape, I make use of Aisopus (Pseudo-Callisthenes) as edited by Müller in Didot's edition, and of a metrical chronicle – one can hardly say poem – based directly upon Aisopus, prepared for publication from a manuscript at St. Mark's, Venice. This metrical version is not, however, based on the actual form of Aisopus presented by Müller from the Parisian MS. No. 1711 and other Paris manuscripts. The differences are perhaps worth studying; but at least it is important to note that the scribe of the Paris MS. 1711 was inexpert, or had a bad copy before him; the scribe of the Venice manuscript (fourteenth century) was skilled. One interesting point about this Venice scribe (and whatsoever will bring these scribes to life again before us is of much

value) is a curious habit he has of inserting, among his analytical section-headings, little stage-directions, apparently addressed to the reader, such as this: 'Now just see what a villain this Nectenabus was!' But now and then the scribe (or the original versifier) addresses one of the characters of his story; just as the gallery often warns the heroine of the subtle machinations of the villain in the melodrama. Here is an example, clearly addressed to Olympias:

'This Nectenabus, O Queen! is no better than a false knave; beware of him!'

A short summary of what may usually be observed in the folk-element underlying any story or biography, certainly in antiquity, may perhaps be useful.

Folk-stories, or folk-representation of stories, are inclined to be charitable. Not that they fear scandal; but they arise usually where scandal, haunter of palaces and houses of the great, does not so greatly frequent. With this, there is a softening of life's actual asperities; Dareius shall not die like a dog in a ditch; he shall be given a cup of cold water, and his eyes shall decently be closed.

Then there is a tendency to orderliness. Facts, or stories, run in pairs, similar or in contrast, and stories which seem at all wild or extravagant are brought into certain conventional forms. Those familiar with the country will have noted this mark of simpler

people. They do not make individual sketches; they unconsciously agree upon a 'vulgate,' and are loyal to it. This is how certain characters receive certain stock characteristics, which are not easily to be shaken off. The same kind of thing happens of course in simpler forms of drama; Frenchmen must be amorous, and policemen have long feet. Then, lastly, along with a certain amount of vividness, and a certain number of picturesque touches – some of which may be, in origin, helps to memory – the general run of folk-tales are simple; and indeed their truth varies with their simplicity. To repeat an earlier analogy; if Truth lives in pools and puddles, as well as in wells, the smaller the puddle, the more (relatively) is the Truth. When elaboration begins, it is commonly very obvious. Two special forms are noticeable; love of prognostics, and general love of the supernatural; but the word is here not the right word, since to these simpler minds Nature and Super-nature were blended all in one. Along with the love of prognostics, is an elementary kind of dramatic irony, dear to the popular mind. It is these more naïve qualities of folk-history which develop into romance and legend, themselves quite separate from it, and nearly always easily recognizable.

So much then by way of introduction. I now pass through some of the salient passages of the early Romance, once more noting, at the risk of much

repetition, that we must see in these rigmaroles the mind or spirit behind them which thus express themselves.

The early part of the Romance deals with the story of Nectanebus (the spelling differs from that of the metrical version) already referred to. Here the interest (apart from the Egyptian desire to make Alexander an Egyptian of the royal house) lies in this, that the King is a magician, as the Pharaohs of Egypt were supposed to be, and as the Greek Proteus, whose name seems to reveal his Egyptian origin, was also reputed to be; for while the magical powers of the Pharaohs were manifold, they often showed them by the assumption of many different forms and shapes; and Proteus certainly stands at the head of all quick-change artists. Nectanebus, then, by means of his many disguises,[1] becomes the father of Alexander and, as we have seen, turns private tutor to his son, receiving the scurvy reward of a push into a dark pit.

Comic touches which enter into this part of the story suggest that even the Egyptian authors of the fable did not mean it to be taken too seriously.

One school story (from Mieza) is worth mention. Aristotle asks Alexander what he would do when he

[1] And chiefly the disguise which Ammon was supposed to assume, that of a serpent. In this we can see how the whole foolish rigmarole of Nectanebus' fatherhood began.

inherited his kingdom; Alexander replies, 'Let the morrow take care of itself.' Here we have a genuine touch; Alexander was always the prince of opportunists, and his military successes were largely due to his remarkable power of sudden adaptation – as with hill-tribes, and with the wheeling Parthian tactics of Spitamenes' cavalry. One need not say that Bucephalas in this Romance appears as a man-eating horse – a type already known to Greek mythology.

In view of modern standards, it is of interest to note that Alexander in the Romance is a great sportsman, and wins a chariot race. He also reconciles his Father and Mother, who had drifted apart, in a way which recalls the child of melodrama, so dear to pit and gallery. The Romance clears Alexander of any complicity in the murder of Philip. Indeed, he takes up warmly the blood-feud with the murderer's kin, and Philip dies happily, knowing that he will be avenged.

One thing which we cannot but feel about Alexander, in the light of the historians, is that he began quite early to shelve, as far as he dared, the older Macedonian civil and military advisers. But the Romance will have none of this; Alexander was no Rehoboam; indeed, the Romance lays stress on the value of older men, even in 'extreme years,' both in this passage and in a later one.

At the opening of Alexander's career emphasis is

laid on his Fortune (this, as we have seen, is a reflex from the philosophers). The monk who tells the tale of Alexander in Chaucer says that everyone

'Hath herd somewhat or all of his fortune,'

the word being no doubt used precisely.

It is towards the end of the First Book of Pseudo-Callisthenes that the Letters begin, with a solid interchange of solemn defiances between Alexander and Dareius, and letters of Dareius to his satraps. Dareius calls himself 'King of Kings and Mighty God.' The Second Book opens with letters of Alexander to Athens (which sends a very 'laconic' answer, 'We will not.'). Into these are woven Homeric reminiscences and odd tags of proverbial philosophy. Of special interest is Demosthenes' statement that Alexander is truly a Greek, as well as several allusions to food-shortage in Greece, which may certainly have been a contributing factor to the Eastern expedition. Perhaps it is a little surprising to find a parallel to the tennis-ball story in *Henry V* in the account of Dareius' early negotiations. 'We have sent him,' says Dareius to his generals, 'a strap for his castigation, and a ball for his amusement.'

After letters come debates; and after debates, little stories of adventure under military disguises, and of chivalrous treatment upon discovery. Then come letters again, in which Dareius finally abandons

his now captive family. This depreciation of Dareius' character, in what seems to have been his one strong point, is of special interest in view of the glorification of Dareius' strategy and courage; but both, in their own way, are to redound to the credit of Alexander.

The Greek Romance, as we now have it, has been built up gradually, extending at least into Byzantine times. Jewish and Christian touches occur. One of these there may be found in the story of the death of Nectanebus, who took Alexander on a 'high mountain' to show him the stars. The Greek has some reminiscence here of the Gospels, in the story of the Temptation. Another curious reminiscence, of St. Paul's account of his own bodily weakness and small stature, may possibly lie behind the idea that Alexander was of small build; the Persians, into whose camp he had entered in disguise, but remained as Dareius' guest (all this interchange of courtesies is on correct early mediaeval lines), 'did not, however, know that in so small a vessel' (St. Paul's own word) 'there was a glory as of heaven-sent fortune.' An odd story follows of Alexander keeping all the cups from which he drank, and explaining, when Dareius courteously expostulated, that he himself always made a present of the cups to his guests – a touch of magnificence which reminds us of the dinners of the Dorias at Genoa, after which the gold plate used to

be thrown into the sea, below the surface of which nets had previously been stretched.

The preliminaries to the battle which follows are all orderly and dignified, as in the famous battle where the French called, 'Messieurs les Anglais! tirez les premiers!' In the battle itself there is confusion, and the river, like the brook Kishon, sweeps away the Persians, who were crossing its frozen surface. In the interchange of letters which follows the battle, Dareius offers in marriage his daughter Roxane, a pardonable confusion of names. In his death Dareius is at peace with Alexander and admires his all-victorious prowess. The greater prominence of the women characters, both here and at the end of Alexander's life (Roxane saves him from throwing himself into the Euphrates), clearly reflects the Byzantine epoch.

Of the Brahmans and their conversations mention has already more than once been made; much is made of them in the Romance.

Towards the end of the Second Book begin stories of the wonders met with during the expedition. These come more fully later, in Alexander's letter to Aristotle. They reflect, as we can see, Alexander as the explorer and scientist; in pursuit both of science and of commercial possibilities Alexander descends to the bed of the sea in a diving-bell. There is a giant crab, and a monster fish which takes the diving-bell into its jaws, casting Alexander ashore (a

possible reminiscence of the story of Jonah). From this alarming experience Alexander learns that even he must not attempt the impossible.[1] No particular attempt is made by any of the revisers of the Romance to fit all this in together; section follows section with only the most happy-go-lucky sutures. Stories follow about wonderful springs; in one, a dried fish comes to life; in the other (an 'immortal' spring – that is, a perennial spring, but the epithet provides a legend) Cale, daughter of Alexander and of a certain Une, is immortalized. Alexander summons her and gives her the name of Nereis, and banishes her from his sight. This is worth noting both as showing how names were altered (compare Barsine-Stateira, Adeia-Eurydice) almost at will, and because it makes Alexander, the son of a magician, also the father of a fairy. Letters from Alexander to Olympias, based on actual letters, close this book.

The Third Book begins with letters, this time from Porus. The incident of Alexander's penetration into Dareius' camp is here repeated; Alexander studies the ways of the elephants, and by a most curious stratagem, of heating brazen statues and enticing the elephants to charge them, saves his army from a much-feared danger. Here Alexander

[1] This little bit of moral is interesting, since the authors of the Romance have abstained from many obvious temptations to point morals.

is the Odysseus who has an answer to every problem. The accounts of the Dareius battles are partly repeated, but varied by a duel in the battle on the Hydaspes; and Porus is depicted as a mighty giant.

Some long passages once more on the Brahmans follow; these are evidently part of some lengthy essay on the simple and philosophic life; into this is inserted a passage of one Palladius on the same subject, a report of certain early Christian missionaries. To balance the narratives of the wonders and monsters of India, is a descriptive letter from Alexander to Aristotle; enchanted islands, wondrous beasts, fill the pages. It is a mediaeval Bestiary thrown into epistolary form.

So it all rambles on, with episodes of Semiramis, and of the Amazons, till, after a final letter to Olympias, we reach the story of Alexander's death and the account of his will and testament. Every here and there, in these later sections, strata of genuine history appear.

So much, then, for this strange but rather fascinating farrago. Its varied development in later times is not surprising, if we consider the popular love of romance, especially when it centres round some great world-hero. Alexander was specially fitted for the part, and it would have meant a great loss to literature had legendary romance not spun its gossamer webs about him.

CHAPTER XII

ALEXANDER THE APOSTLE

THERE is something to be said for closing a History of Greece, as Curtius[1] does, with the battle of Chaeroneia, which was indeed a great break in Greek as in European history. There is next to nothing to be said for closing Greek history with the death of Alexander. His work remained, and the interest of following out the channels through which the results of his conquests flowed is as great as the interest of following his conquests. With biography it is otherwise. The story must close with the hero's last exit. Externally, in one sense, all that Alexander achieved held good; in another sense all went to pieces. There is an obvious but also dangerous parallel with the break-up of Napoleon's empire. Certain it is that Alexander, whose own succession was regular, had not the means of ensuring succession. His son Heracles, born of Barsine, Memnon's widow, was indeed set up for a brief space, at the age of seventeen, but was assassinated by Polysperchon, who had set out to help him to the throne. The story of Roxane's little Alexander,[2] L'Aiglon, as we may call him, is melancholy. Though he appears, it seems, on Egyptian coinage, he 'reigned'

[1] The German historian.

[2] Called Alexander Aegus; perhaps this should be 'Alexander of Aegae,' the royal capital.

only till 311 (his first 'regnal year' being 317), when he was assassinated, with his mother, by orders of Kassander. Though the Alexander romance pictures a death-bed scene where he parts his kingdom among his marshals, the best historians, while telling us that those present pressed the dying Emperor for some expression of his will, report as his sole answer the mysterious reply, 'To the strongest.'

If Alexander was at the moment already delirious the reply may mean anything or nothing. It does not sound like the reply of a patient already incapable, since it is in fact a reply to the supposed question. Assuming, therefore, that Alexander was still capable of clear thought, the reply, if correctly reported, is one of two things, either a cynical casting of the apple of strife on the board,[1] as if Alexander had said 'You may fight it out,' or it contains, as do the death-bed utterances of many great men, some riddling allusion, 'speaking clearly enough to them that understood.' What might this meaning be? 'The strongest,' at least in the epic diction which Alexander knew so well, would suggest Zeus, the Almighty, or Achilles, or Heracles. Alexander

[1] With definite allusion to the prize 'for the fairest,' at the Judgment of Paris. Alexander knew his Greek literature thoroughly, and as Falstaff, dying, turned to the twenty-third Psalm, Alexander might well hark back to one of the many versions of the myth which underlay the first great conflict of Greece and Asia.

claimed to be son of Zeus; he modelled himself on Achilles; he emulated the deeds of Heracles, and called by that name his first-born son. As Achilles can hardly be in question, I suggest that the words 'To the strongest' either were independent of the question asked, and meant 'Offer sacrifice to Zeus Almighty' – a natural dying direction for a son of Zeus; or, being an answer to the question, hinted not obscurely at Heracles, his first-born, son of Barsine, a 'fine woman,' as Aristobulus says, to whom Parmenio had pointed as worthy to be wedded by Alexander, both being of noble Persian birth, and having had Greek education; thus uniting in herself the East and West which Alexander so laboured to unite. It is not in the least unlikely that in his last moments Alexander's thoughts turned to the neglected Barsine and her children, especially her son Heracles.[1] All this, however, must be and remain guesswork. The question of Alexander's wives is made difficult by confusion of names. He certainly married the Bactrian Roxane. At Susa he married perhaps Parysatis, daughter of Ochus, and certainly Stateira, daughter of Stateira. There was Barsine, widow of Memnon, captured at Damascus. W. W. Tarn

[1] I hazard the suggestion that if Alexander really said something which sounded like *τῷ κρατίστῳ*, or *τῷ ἀρίστῳ* (Curtius has *optimus*), he said, or attempted to say, *Ἡρακλίσκῳ*. He would naturally think of his son.

(*J.H.S.*, vol. xli, part I) attempts to spirit away both Barsine and Heracles. Berve seems to dispose of this theory. Certain it is, however, that strife actually resulted. There were strivings between the Macedonian cavalry and infantry, the infantry holding to older tradition, and trying to assert Macedonian unity. The cavalry and the marshals, meanwhile, were thinking of themselves, and their shares of the dead lion's feast. It was they who ultimately, but in divers manners, got what they had hoped for; but the Empire was split up. Yet these successors were the real apostles of Hellenism; and thus it was that most of the evil that Alexander did was interred with his bones, and the good he did lived after him.

Farther than this Alexander cannot be summarized, and for many reasons, such as are given in the first chapter, where, apart from the view of history there expressed, which underlies this present essay in biography, it was emphasized that the simple method of following 'hard facts' to their simple logical deductions, to which a materialist and mechanical view of history would accustom us, will not give a true presentation. But beyond this, if ever a character was a mixed, almost Protean character, it was that of Alexander. He was a man of policy, swayed by moods which overmastered policy; a man of pre-determinate system, broken again and

again by impulse; and just because policy and system were so swayed and broken, Alexander was almost certainly *felix opportunitate mortis* in that he would not have brought to achievement that which it was his desire and ambition to achieve. But he wrought better than he meant, and we must (at the cost of some repetition of ideas expressed in the first chapter) see why this was.

Whether it is a scientific distinction or not, it is a convenient distinction to speak of mind and spirit, or, as Keats gives it, intelligence and spirit – a distinction not wholly accepted by the Neo-idealist philosophers of Italy. Spirit is that which drives; mind is that which perceives, which reasons, which projects. When we think, as we are throughout this present work thinking, of the Spirit and Mind of an Age, of a vast collection of individuals (whom we should philosophically term 'monads') as well as of the spirit and mind of the 'great man' of the age, we can see easily enough that however great this man may be, he is really less than the sum of the spirits and minds of his epoch. A genius is an over-mastering spirit; a 'super-spirit'; we may call such a one 'dominating'; but he cannot actually over-master and dominate that which has largely gone to the creating of himself. In the Alexander age we see, therefore, a great spirit or force at work. This outpouring of spiritual energy will seem usually to

occur at times when, either by some great national victory or by other means, the dominant spirits of an age are freed from the wastage of petty quarrelling or interior politics, and when, therefore, the pent-up reservoirs of spiritual power may flood a thirsty land. Such times are times of expansion, of 'spaciousness,' of discovery, of æsthetic freedom, of renewed conquest. What seems at first strange in the great spiritual overflow which we call Hellenism is that it occurred not after a great national, that is Hellenic, victory, but after what seemed to be a crushing defeat. But there we are wrong. Chaeroneia caused the Greeks to forget their quarrels; but Hellas, being, with Canaan – though in a very different way and kind – a reservoir fed by irrepressible and, it may well seem, inexhaustible springs of spiritual force, flowed over just because these springs were no longer tapped and wasted by the aridities of internecine strife. It is no use speculating what might have happened had the great stream flowed westward. Its natural trend was eastward; and if Alexander pleaded revenge as a motive for his conquests, it proved indeed a noble 'revenge' for that earlier, but less voluminous, westward flood which had given Greece, and gave also to primitive Rome, its initial impulses. That Alexander's conquests, bloody and destructive, became victories of humanism was because he himself was borne along with

that great flood, and because his victories were each and all just so many breaking down of dams and barriers that might have checked the flow. It would be unjust, however, to look on Alexander merely as an instrument, and as a largely unconscious instrument. Great men (as we have already seen) are 'dominant' spirits among spirits; they do themselves in part control, direct, create. If ever a man was the 'child of his age,' it was Shakespeare; if ever a man deserved the title 'creator,' it was he. There is, and always must be, this perpetual antinomy in all great men. Again I must venture to suggest the simile of surf-riding. The expert uses the tides, currents, heavings, ebullitions of the sea, angry or not, but preferably angry. His plank is not very important, but it plays its part. He watches every breaking foam on the waves below him, as well as the point on the shore at which he must steadily aim. The part he plays is wonderful; but the waves which bear him in or engulf him are greater than he; they were formed long ago in distant ocean; winds, suctions, attractions, subaqueous disturbances, have borne their part in forming them; and they, in their distant origin, or in their present resistless billowings and breakings, are most of all worthy of our study. They bear the hero on; he could not 'ride' without them; they make him, not he them. Of course this simile breaks down in the last words. The truly great man

does not only use, but partly forms and directs, the currents and movements of his day.

But what, then, was this 'Hellenism' which Alexander's work set free to flood over the conquered East? The word generally connotes 'that volume of thought and aspirations which visualized all Greeks as a unity or possible unity.' It is more than mere education, mere ideas. On the one hand, then, it suggests the breakdown of the city states, the growth of a 'Greek cosmopolitanism,' and on the other it suggests the philosophy, sciences, arts and crafts which this breakdown, and the wider views which followed it, threw open to the world. Various people had thought of 'Hellenism,' had 'projected' the idea of a united Greece – whether by common enmity against Persia, or by virtue of peaceful merger in the Persian Empire. The astounding thing is that Philip was almost its creator; at least he made its creation possible. The reason we shall presently see; but to clear the ground we may state first that while Greece, under Philip, lost much political liberty, political liberty is not necessarily the best kind of liberty; it had, indeed, proved rather a hindrance to all that was best in Greece, to all that was most Greek. The city state is an excellent political idea; but a country like Greece, where there were several city states, often cut off by mountains or straits, many of them humble and unassuming, a few prominent, and these few

usually struggling among themselves, save when a common enemy united them – such a country may indeed think in wider terms than its own little unities, but is not likely to develop such thought into any kind of practical reality. Now Greek thought was intensely practical; you had only to remove somehow the narrowness and exclusiveness of Greek political life, and all that wider thought, all those wider ideals, all the summed-up lessons of a noble literature, came rushing as through an open sluice and flooding far beyond Greece's narrow boundaries.[1]

Thus Alexander's march was literally what the Early Victorians used to call a 'march of mind.'[2] Before Alexander, there had been expansion. The Greeks, with a none too fruitful country, were keen traders. But Hellenism, while using trade-routes, and carried no doubt by these very traders,[3] was something far above trade. The contempt of the Greeks for mere retail trade, as shown in the con-

[1] We must all along remember that Hellenism was itself, in origin, Asiatic. This was worked out in Sir W. R. Ramsay's Gifford Lectures of 1915–16. Under Alexander and his successors the wheel came full circle. It is quite likely that the Asian elements in Greek civilization remained strong enough, through constant reinforcements to help Hellenism to become thoroughly palatable to the East.

[2] The phrase parodied by Peacock (*Crotchet Castle*).

[3] As Christianity may have been introduced into Britain by tin- or pearl-merchants.

temptuous metaphorical use of their word *καπηλεύειν*, is clear enough. Perhaps the successful issue of the first Persian war first set Hellenism really afloat – but in a cramped and still limited sense. One finds Greek scientists, engineers, professional men in the Far East, as, later on, Greek educated slaves were much valued, and did much to spread Hellenism, in Rome. Greeks penetrated all along the Mediterranean, and always brought with them something entirely new and fresh, and, what is more to the purpose, and unlike Roman culture, usually attractive. Macedonia itself was partly – in this limited sense – Hellenized. Zeuxis paints, Euripides writes at Aegae. Now comes Chaeroneia, and next comes Alexander. So far Hellenism had spread steadily enough, but (I quote Bevan) [1] only 'on the borders. . . . What would have happened had it continued to depend only upon its spiritual force for its propagation we cannot say.' Regarding, as I do, this 'spiritual force' as the only true driving power, I hold that Hellenism would have 'got there' all the same, but slower. As it was, Alexander 'laid low the mountains and exalted the valleys' and made a high-road for it into the heart of Asia. Somehow the half-Hellenized Macedonians became preachers of Hellenism; and their new subjects were as ready to absorb the spirit of their conquerors as Alexander

[1] Art. 'Hellenism' in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

showed himself ready (here certainly stemming the very tide he had allowed to flow) to adopt the customs of his new subjects. In one way and another Hellenism travelled like a Fiery Cross; and all the later systematization kept the creed and practice vigorous and fresh.

Say, if you will, that this culture was largely spread by the *Graeculus esuriens*, ready to go anywhere; the needy sophist, school-teacher, barber, or indeed knife-grinder, for all that matters; it was not the force of the man himself that counted; it was the force behind him. Hellenism came when it did and grew as it did because it is of the spirit. Hellenism was, in fact, an immense overflow of the spiritual and the mental; of impulse and of thought, the bursting of a great reservoir of intuition, speculation, logic, practical schematization.[1] To follow this out we must try to analyse the Greek himself.

Usually, in books dealing with Greek history and life, we run through a few great names; leaders, writers, one or two great philosophers. We must learn to think of the great cloud of the unknown. 'Mute inglorious Miltons' there may be in our own country. But Greece must have been full, if not of 'mute' Homers, of mute, that is to say, obscure and

[1] For Greek theories were never theories. They were always concretized. Plato's *Ideal Republic* is a splendid example of Greek methods.

unknown, thinkers and philosophers.[1] I do not foolishly hazard the notion that all Greeks were philosophers. You did not get much philosophy from a Boeotian farmer. But they were in a remarkable degree a nation of thinkers. Let us take for a moment the word politics. Here are we on whom 'the ends of the world have come'; and 'politics' to us means a little group of ministers whom we have never seen, a larger group of legislators of whom we have exchanged words with one – our own member – and perhaps a few others; leading articles in opposing and combative newspapers; Mr. Pott and Mr. Slurk; and an immense amount of ignorant but positive vapouring in bar-parlours. Even among educated people one hears 'politics' discussed merely as a 'party' matter; and constantly the discussion centres on or feebly wavers round some rival personalities. The simple fact is that in politics we are yet an uneducated people, and our whole system, such as it is, so far from calling on us to think, saves us the trouble. Now the Greek – and naturally one thinks rather of the Athenian[2] – could beat us in personalities and vulgar abuse, and no doubt in the

[1] As the workers on the Elgin marbles must have been each a 'mute' Phidias or Alcamenes.

[2] Chiefly because we know most about him. But Plato and Xenophon and, no doubt, Aristotle had high opinions of Spartan culture.

barbers' shops he talked as vapid stuff as could be, but he had at least some idea of principles, and he did understand how to think. Moreover, he was taught something of politics, and the word to him did not mean merely the strife of tongues, but suggested to him something wider and better: his state, and what it meant to him; his place in it; his relations to it; and therein, to his fellow-citizens; and his civic duties. If the picture I have given were not in its main features true, much of Greek literature must be a mere parody. Antigone holds (perhaps quite erroneous) ideas about unwritten laws as against written laws; Socrates could always find someone in the market-place worth button-holing; Plato introduces character after character, from old men to boys, and all of them talk, or are easily led to talk, good stuff, and certainly make noble listeners. Euripides' plays, over which we continue to puzzle, were performed in the open before the whole city; the audience cried out (as an Italian pit will cry out) at the slightest mispronunciation; and that gives some idea of their attentiveness to the matter in hand. Play after play, from the *Prometheus* to the *Helena*, was performed before this motley throng; while we keep Shakespearian drama alive by the personalities of favourite actors or by freakish liberties with the text.

The point need not be laboured; but the Greek,

always ready for a fight – and for an absolutely unnecessary fight, such as the Peloponnesian War, as much as for any – and yet more meditative than the meditative East, 'plung'd in thought' – the Greek, deceitful and false, but instinct (as were the Italians of Lionardo's day) with that Beauty which is Truth, and with that higher Truth which is Beauty – the Greek, low and debased in many aspects, yet 'rolling out Olympians' even amid Boeotian marshes – the Greek, always ready for family discord, and yet alive with music, rhythm and all that makes for dignity and peace – the Greek, one bundle of contraditions, was a philosopher to his finger-tips and to his inmost heart-fibre. His region was the mind and spirit; and in one very real sense he was more spiritual than the Hebrew himself. And here, then, we begin to see the meaning of and the directing impulses of what is called Hellenism. It was a great outpouring, a great overflowing, of the Greek spirit, long cabin'd and confin'd in his dells or mountain-girt plains; a great deluge of ideas, visions, 'projections,' on a canvas at last provided for him; nothing conscious, perhaps, or only in such profound teachers as Isocrates and Aristotle, but a great welling up of splendid energies wasted up to now in petty quarrels. No mechanical view of History will explain the spread of Hellenism or tell us how Greek ideas of a great world-state, of a united religion, of a more passionate art, of a

solemn yet practical philosophy, of systematized science, of city planning, yes, of 'beautiful' boots and shoes[1] and knives and spoons, just flowed on in the wake of a conquering army which had just conquered Greece. Thus Alexander was partly consciously and partly unconsciously the Apostle, as he has been called, of Hellenism; and as he slew and burned, and 'ploughed with swords the field,' he left soil and furrows ready for something higher and better than all military conquests.

One rather obvious comparison suggests itself; another small nation, with a different history, brooding under Eastern stars, also built up a great reservoir of spiritual strength, and passing along the roads of the Roman Empire, spread by means of humble persons 'shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace' the stored-up wisdom of ages. When one of these missionaries was asked why he faced dangers and martyrdom, he replied that he was 'constrained,' and that it would be 'woe for him' if he did it not. Just so, from a similar spiritual necessity, Greece was 'constrained,' in a different

[1] The reference is to Xenophon, the temporary general and the country squire, who enshrines 'political' views in his popular treatises; and also in his *Œconomicus* shows us the Greek ideas of orderliness, arrangement, æstheticism, entering into the management of a country villa. 'When the boots and shoes,' says Ischomachus, 'are arranged by sizes and in a row, how beautiful it is!'

way, with a different impulse, and with a different message, to follow in the wake of Alexander.

It is no use denying to Alexander the honour of his share in this great work, which is almost the most miraculous part of his miraculous achievements. He may have been at heart, as Niebuhr might say, a barbarian; but he was trained by his cautious father in all the wisdom of Greece at Greece's wisest moment, and whether he held his great tutor in high esteem or not, he cannot have been, and does not indeed seem to have been, insensible to his high teaching. It is true that Alexander's own policy seemed to tend (as Grote and Niebuhr say) to Persianizing Macedon rather than to Hellenizing Asia; but many great men build wiser than they know, and in so far as their ultimate work is good, they must have proper credit. This is indeed a natural corollary of the theories set out in the Introduction. The great man is a focus for the ideas of his time, and himself becomes the chief 'idea' among them. Had Alexander been coldly unreceptive, unsympathetic, he could not have been what, to his honour, he was, a 'carrier' of the spiritual ideas of Greece through a materialized East. As things worked out, Alexander making war for war's sake brought culture; a curious contrast to a great European nation which, professing a crusade of Culture, brought the desolation of war. I should like

to conclude with the aphorism that the nations which conquer most are the nations which think most; but though our own best minds are equal to any, we have been a great conquering nation without being a great nation of thinkers.

Thus, then, Alexander is a great and potent spirit partly impelling and largely impelled by other spirits in combination. As such, we see him as almost a whirlwind force, as Nâdir Shah, as Napoleon, and as many other conquerors were whirlwind forces. Had Aristotle proved a more sympathetic teacher, or Alexander a more sympathetic pupil, that force might have expended itself in the realm of intellect. But the age was an age of battlings and conquests; it was not yet time for a gospel of peace. But along with this energy, this force, goes mind, which may act as a brake upon force, in the form of reason, or as a stimulant, in the form of affection or directed will. The total mind-power of Alexander's age is almost incalculable; the mental range of Aristotle almost appals us; and while Alexander did not neglect the claims of reason, he was largely urged on and stimulated by the affections and will, and herein especially by a zeal for discovery so strong as to make him rank among our great explorers. Then he inherited, and acquired, the fruit of many years of reasoning on the various aspects of Greek politics; the many theories which centred round the city-state,

and round vaster conceptions of nationalism, of internationalism. A spirit among spirits, Alexander was a mind among minds; and, without any contradiction, a 'dominant' mind. In virtue of this double dominance, he is the Great Man of his age, and one of the greatest men of all ages. Here, however, I seem to hear some still unsatisfied reader exclaim: 'All this may be very well; but are we not to have any indication what manner of man this hero actually was? Is history, then, so doubtful and so vague that it cannot even give us a picture of one so famous and so conspicuous?'

Yes; a picture; but a moving picture, a picture reflecting not so much the real, the actual, the 'historical' Alexander, whom we literally cannot hope to reconstruct, but the Alexander as his own age, and as after ages, saw him, projected him. With the manifold spirit of his age which impelled Alexander there was the manifold mind which conceived him. Into their central figure they poured their ideas and their ideals, often indeed contradictory, as the 'real' Alexander, so far as we can see, was contradictory. At first Alexander is a brutal and crushing enslaver; he becomes the leader of a crusade; soon he is a triumphant conqueror, now chivalrous, now brutal, but always successful; next he is the uniter – by extreme methods, it might seem – of the ever-sundered West and East; then the great scientist,

the indomitable explorer, held from reaching the eastern circle of Ocean only by the travel-weariness of his less indomitable men; finally, the deified hero, almost a god among gods.

Most of all this Alexander, no doubt, really was; certainly such, and more also, the mind of his fellow-mortals made him. In the earliest of his biographers the hero-idea certainly dominates; but (as we have seen in the previous chapter) the following ages threw new and always varying lights upon him; in our own days Droysen and Grote are bridged by Thirlwall; and so long as history desires to concentrate on the man-in-himself, so long will historians continue to differ; and that means, so long will they continue to re-create their own Alexanders. The process is eternal; and in each ensuing age the history of Alexander's age must again become, as Croce tells us, the history of our own time. The past fades; the present alone remains.

But while the 'real' Alexander, as far as he can be found in the moving mists of contradictions and uncertainties, is a legitimate pursuit of history, of far greater interest and of far greater value should be what we have tried to seize in the progress of this work, the Alexander-idea; the cumulative presentation, not of a single personality, nor even of one narrow circle of persons, but of many ages, and of a cloud of innumerable witnesses.

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